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HISTORY OF NAPOLEON I

LANFREY

THE HISTORY

OF

NAPOLEON THE FIRST

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BY

P. LANFREY

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THE

HISTORY OF NAPOLEON.

CHAPTER I.

LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS OF 1809 AND 1810. CREATION OF THE *DOMAINE EXTRAORDINAIRE*. THE STATE PRISONS. SEIZURE OF MADAME DE STAEL'S WORK ON GERMANY. THE DECENNIAL PRIZES. (*December* 1809—*October* 1810.)

THE Legislative Body had at this period wellnigh attained perfection in the performance of the part which Napoleon had long since mentally assigned to it. It had caused itself to be so rarely spoken of, that one scarcely knew whether it was still in existence, and almost the whole of 1809 had passed by without any one perceiving that the Body representing the nation had not held its customary session. It was impossible for that assembly to give any better proof of its being animated by the spirit which had presided at its transformation; but, by a misfortune that seemed attached to its very existence, its docility and actual insignificance served it no better than its former ambition. Though no longer called dangerous, it was considered useless. Whenever the Legislative Body was now mentioned in the Emperor's presence, he exclaimed against the folly of such an institution. All the most important laws, in fact, appeared in the form of decrees or of a Senatus-Consultum, and most frequently the Legislative Body was not

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called upon even to ratify them. The only occupation left to it was the revision of the Code originally framed in the Council of State, or the making of laws for some local interest; even then, there were bitter complaints of the delay to which such laws were subjected, as if they could have been voted by an absent Body. In general the Assembly passed every project presented by Government without any discussion whatever. The official returns of the sessions of 1809 and 1810 are less than a twentieth part of one session in the present day; moreover, at least one half of those short sittings was devoted to the examination of works presented to the Legislative Body by the writers of the day, with the evident intention of filling up their leisure hours.

Were no other defects attributable to the Legislative Body, it sinned by reminding France, from its name alone, that she formerly had possessed a national representation. That was sufficient to condemn it, and henceforward it was treated with a contempt that foretold the near and definitive suppression of so troublesome an excrescence. The session opened on the 3rd of December, 1809. Some fifty of its members, whose service was expiring, were to be re-elected on the 31st; but a Senatus-Consultum appeared dispensing with the useless ceremony, and deciding that the Deputies should remain in the Chamber, not only during the session of 1809, but also in that of 1810. Again, new departments had been added to the Empire, and Deputies ought to have been elected by them, but another Senatus-Consultum saved them alike electoral trouble and all embarrassment as to choice, by enacting that these Deputies should be appointed by the Senate. Nor was this all. The session of 1809, short though it was, had necessarily to be prolonged into the first month of 1810, in consequence of the delay that had occurred in its assembling: what use then would there be in convoking it anew or in making another opening speech in 1810? These were only so many complications—and for so little! It was decided, therefore, that the session of 1810 should immediately follow that of 1809, both making but one, without requiring all the empty show which gave the

public such false notions of the importance of the Body. Lastly, with a view to complete the degradation of this unfortunate Assembly in the eyes of France, the Emperor appointed his Grand Chamberlain Montesquiou to be its President, when the presidential chair was vacated by Fontane, on his appointment as Grand Master of the University. The national representatives thus found themselves associated with the service of the Palace in the person of the man whose duty it was to make their rights respected.

The labours of this double session of 1809–1810 might, however, have done honour to the last days of the Legislative Body, had that body been something more than a mere simple registry of the Imperial will. But long and cruel experience had convinced the Deputies that the slightest symptom of criticism or of reform with regard to the Government projects, even those most unconnected with politics, only resulted in irritating their master, and in causing those matters to be ordered by decrees which ought to have been decided upon by a law. They confined themselves therefore to a dull and unvarying approbation of measures that were contrary to every principle. The Emperor had acted in this manner when, on his private authority, he ordered the canals belonging to the State to be sold, under pretext of applying the produce of such sale to the completion of the new canal works undertaken in various directions. The Legislative Body hesitated to give its approval to such an illegal alienation of so precious a portion of the State property, whereupon Napoleon passed them over by issuing simple decrees (dated May 17 and August 10, 1809), and the Legislative Body, obliged to submit, converted a measure into law which it most justly considered a spoliation of public property.

The summary discussions on the Penal Code, which latter was adopted in bulk with scarcely any preliminary debate during the course of the session of 1810, offers a still more striking example of their compulsory submission. All the criminal lawyers of the time repudiated the penalty of confiscation as iniquitous and immoral, not only because it visited the crime of

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the father upon the children, but also as in a certain sense giving the executive an interested motive for the discovery of culprits; a dangerous temptation, when power is represented by one man. Napoleon himself, when restoring to several of the *emigrés* property of theirs which had been confiscated by the Revolution, had participated in the feeling of reprobation which had resulted from the abuse then made of that penalty. But as he had condemned it merely in the hope of gaining partisans, it was perfectly consistent with his character that he should wish to preserve it for the purpose of frightening his enemies. He loudly declared in the midst of the Council of State[1] that he would never deprive himself of so formidable a weapon, and the lawyers of the Council gave way, as usual, to his will. Had there still lurked even a shadow of independence or dignity in the bosom of the Legislative Body it would have been shown in this instance, for the opinion of all enlightened men was unanimous in condemnation of punishment by confiscation. So low had it fallen, that the public now never viewed those as criminals who were struck by the law, but reserved their anger for the judges who applied it. From a philosophical and social point of view it at least afforded a subject for discussion of the highest interest.

The project was presented by Treilhard, who in a few disdainful words refuted the objections raised against confiscation. 'It is objected,' he said, 'that the punishment by confiscation descends upon children who could not have been accomplices in their father's crime. *But who shall suffer for the faults of the father, unless it be his children?*' In virtue of the same inference, it would be quite as just to make them share in the punishment of death. A few days later, the reporter of the Legislative Commission, Daubersaert, in his turn declared that confiscation was an excellent mode of punishment, and infallibly efficacious. 'An ambitious man,' he said, 'does not think only of his own personal elevation, he thinks of labouring for posterity, and exposes himself for the sake of his family.

[1] Sitting of January 20, 1809

The fear of reducing his children to poverty is a stronger motive than death for restraining his parricidal arm.'[1] No voice was raised in the Assembly to confute these singular theories, and although the general feeling was eminently opposed to the maintenance of confiscation as a punishment, it was nevertheless inserted among our penal laws. The Bill presented by Treilhard, which filled one entire book of the Code, was adopted in silence, at the end of a report consisting of a few pages, by two hundred and twenty-five votes against thirty-five,[2] without one protest, one observation, nay not even one word that might have informed the world how, on this as on many another occasion, it was the will of one single man which had prevailed against the feeling of a whole nation.

But why should one wonder at this silence on so apparently inoffensive a question? If confiscation were expunged from our Code, would it not be equivalent to condemning it abroad as well as at home, and what would become of the finances of the Empire without the resource of confiscations in foreign countries? We do not here allude to the enormous contributions which Napoleon levied on vanquished nations; but in addition to such tributes, which, as he expressed it, ought to feed war, and which balanced his budgets, what riches flowed into his coffers merely from confiscations! Princely domains seized in every country for the benefit of the Imperial Crown, or to serve as gifts to his generals, the property of the grandees of Spain sequestrated, the sale of Spanish wools, the seizure of English merchandise, of American vessels, of the property of the Italian clergy, and of many confiscations that were never accounted for! All such measures, classed as exceptional, had become of constant and regular occurrence; they yielded receipts upon which it was the habit to calculate; how then was it possible not to regard confiscation as a permanent and universal practice?

[1] *Archives parlementaires*, published by Mavidal and Laurent. Sitting of February 2, 1810.

[2] Ibid. Sitting of February 12, 1810.

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The Legislative Body would have acted with so much the greater impropriety had it rejected the question of confiscation, from the fact that the Emperor had but recently presented a law for the approval of the Senate, the principal aim of which was to give a sort of legal sanction, under the title of *domaine extraordinaire*, to this corrupt source of revenue. Hitherto the Emperor had appropriated to himself the free disposal of all the prizes of victory, at first under the designation of 'exterior receipts' (*recettes extérieures*), and then under that of 'treasury of the army' (*trésor de l'armée*). He had considered himself the legitimate owner and sovereign dispenser of all property acquired by the blood of our soldiers; and had disposed of it as he pleased, without allowing any one to control the use he made of it, or to dare to contest the right he was pleased to assume to himself. And this was not the least outrageous of his usurpations. But it was perhaps better for public morality that the nation should appear to ignore exactions which she could not prevent, and that he alone should be responsible for iniquity of which he alone was guilty. Now, however, the possession of this right *de facto* no longer contented him, and he demanded that it should be conferred upon him by a law. In other words, he desired that the whole nation should participate in the responsibility without being allowed to share in the profits, which were to continue exclusively at his discretion.

The creation of the *domaine extraordinaire* was part of a collection of arrangements which were to end in increasing the public and private fortune of the Emperor to an extravagant degree. The Bill presented to the Senate on the 20th of January, 1810, and voted by it on the 30th without any discussion, confirmed, besides the *domaine extraordinaire*, the endowment of the Crown, and the private estate, appanage and endowment of the Princes and Princesses. Inheriting an ill-defined state of things, by virtue of which the Crown property most frequently absorbed the National property, the Constituent Assembly in 1791, acting upon true principles, had restored the Crown property to the National estate, deciding at the same time that the sovereign should only enjoy its life-use and

possess a civil list in money alone. The Assembly wished the sovereign to have no interest separate from that of the State. The Empire, in 1804, had adopted, in all its entirety, the law of 1791. No one would then have dared to assign anything to the Emperor beyond his civil list and the usufruct of the ancient Crown property.

Since then, the Emperor had seized in the countries he had conquered numberless palaces and estates belonging to their former sovereigns. The Senatus-Consultum now united all these acquisitions to the Crown property. While declaring the inalienability of this estate, it at the same time made it a property distinct from that belonging to the State, which lost all right of disposing of it. The Emperor, on the contrary, in addition to his civil list and the enjoyment of the Crown property was to possess a private income, derivable either from such acquisitions, or by inheritance or from sums allotted to him—in short from the personal property of the Crown over and above thirty million francs. He might dispose of it as he pleased 'without being tied,' said the Senatus-Consultum, 'by any provision of the Code.' It is only too easy to imagine the constant temptation thus offered to increase the private property of the sovereign at the expense of that of the Crown and the State. 'But!' exclaimed Regnault de St. Jean d'Angély, in his statement of the motives which suggested this arrangement, —'suppose the Emperor should regret the pleasure attached to the possession of a private estate, could any one be angry at his thus envying his subjects? and if the monarch were susceptible of this sentiment, or rather let us say this weakness, would a law be just which would force him to choose between the sacrifice of his tastes and that of his duty?'[1]

To sanction such weakness by law was undoubtedly an excellent method of anticipating its possible occurrence. 'Besides,' added Regnault, 'this was a most disinterested act on the part of the Emperor; he thought of it merely for his posterity'—which as yet existed only in the Bill;

[1] *Archives parlementaires.* Sitting of January 20, 1810.

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'and his thoughts, which embraced the whole world, had never rested on the charms of individual property. His Majesty no doubt has noticed examples of the kind and can conceive its possibility, but he never, I believe, has himself experienced the feeling.' The Senatus-Consultum which Regnault presented, and which placed the riches of many nations in the hands of one single man, seemed to accord little with this piece of delicate flattery. The creation of the *domaine extraordinaire* was justified by other considerations of even less weight. The orator admitted that at every epoch and in every nation all that had been gained by conquest had been merged in the Crown property, or, in other words, in that of the State. The Emperor not only abrogated this ancient usage, but it was looked upon as a claim for additional gratitude; 'for,' said Regnault, 'the Emperor finds the income of the Crown sufficient for all his wants,' and if he retained this property it was with a view to administering it and distributing it amongst his companions in arms. 'Providence had arranged in this manner for the wants of the French army, and had further been enabled to create rich reserves and to preserve vast estates in those countries where our eagles had been planted. . . . In short, it had converted the laurel into a fertile tree, on the fruit of which our brave soldiers fed, while its leaves crowned their brows!'[1]

It is impossible to give an idea of the real tone of events without some quotations from the speeches of the day, which would amply prove the grotesque and at the same time degrading language to which despotism had succeeded in lowering men who ranked amongst the best and most enlightened of their generation. Regnault especially insisted on the necessity of 'interesting every soldier in the preservation of property which belonged to all, by ensuring to the army a share in the fruits of victory.' The *domaine extraordinaire* was, in fact, more or less intended for this object, and the measure in consequence had not contributed to raise the tone of our army. Despite the admirable generosity and disinterestedness which the army at heart preserved, dating from the first wars of the

[1] *Archives parlementaires.* Sitting of the Senate of January 20, 1810.

Revolution, it had on more than one occasion presented the spectacle of one fighting for booty. But the character of its commanders especially suffered from the contagious effects of such ill-gotten wealth; and Napoleon, who was now applauding himself for having found a species of corruption which should ensure their docility, was at a future day to repent bitterly of having in this manner given them interests separate from his own. The day in fact did come when he exclaimed, in utter discouragement, 'They will no longer fight, I have made them too rich!' And what right had he to blame them for a selfishness which he had encouraged both by suggestion and example? Berthier alone had thus acquired an income of 1,350,800 francs, Davout of 910,000, Ney of 728,000, Soult of 305,000, Masséna of 500,000 francs, &c.

The *domaine extraordinaire*, however, was far from relating exclusively to the endowments of the army. It also comprehended gifts destined to keep alive the zeal of high civil functionaries, or to reward the devotion of certain privileged personages, many of whom belonged to the ancient aristocracy. The sum total of such endowments, civil and military, at the end of 1810, amounted to 28,327,472 francs, without including gratuities that were almost equivalent in value. The *domaine extraordinaire* had, moreover, served to endow different public establishments, to erect monuments, and, above all, to supply the deficit annually created in the budget by war. To meet all these expenses, there was real estate of which the revenue was valued at about forty million francs. As to personal property, it seems from an official return of December 31, 1810, that at that date the receipts of the *domaine extraordinaire* at the end of our three last wars amounted to 754,257,174 francs. This return, however, is far from being exact, for the sums which are there stated to represent the seizure of British merchandise or of Spanish confiscations are infinitely below the real amount of the receipts under those heads. The expenses having amounted to a sum of 433,030,228 francs, there remained a fund in hand of 321,226,946 francs.

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The largest portion of these expenses had been absorbed by war. No year passed without Napoleon renewing his engagement in presence of the Legislative Body not to increase the taxes and to maintain the budget at the immovable figure of 730,000,000. Still, despite his skill in making foreign countries feed his troops, he exceeded the resources of his budget in times of war by nearly a hundred millions, and this breach in his finances he repaired by capital drawn from his *domaine extraordinaire*. The Ministers never failed on such occasions to observe that it was his bounty which enabled them to supply the deficiency of the budget, just as if the money had been taken from his private patrimony. And yet, when he tendered as payment contributions of the kind derived from the enemy, was it not rather the nation which was in reality paying with its blood, instead of paying with its coin?

This pretended fixity of the budget was, after all, nothing but outward show intended to deceive the simple-minded public. It suffices to cast one look at the budgets of that period to perceive that the unvarying figure of 730,000,000 was maintained solely by the aid of a most dishonest artifice, which consisted in the habit of carrying expenses hitherto borne by the State to the account of the departments and communes. Owing to this subterfuge, the general taxes ostensibly remained the same, while all the local taxation was increased with impunity. The departments and communes were burdened, not only with the heaviest portion of the expenses relating to public worship, but also with half the salaries of the prefects and sub-prefects, the support of lunatic asylums, of mendicity houses, of the establishments for foundlings, expenses which had previously been defrayed by the budget.

This culpable deceit, conceived with the view of withdrawing from the nation the faint shadow of control which had been left to it over financial matters, had been effected by a decree,[1] like every other measure which was of a nature to exercise any active influence on the progress of affairs. And this was not an accidental whim on the part of the Government, but an absolute and invariable system. The Legislative Body still

[1] Dated June 11, 1809.

made laws, but it obeyed decrees which overruled the law itself and deprived it of all effectual authority. If any measures had been, at all times and in every country, considered within the domain of the law, such assuredly were all those relating to the liberty of the individual, of the press, of printing and publishing. But these questions were withdrawn from legislative control with as much care as had been bestowed on the recent redistribution of the budget or the creation of the *domaine extraordinaire*, Napoleon deciding them by decrees which arbitrarily organised State prisons, a censorship, and a director-generalship of printing and publishing.

The only matter for astonishment in all this is, that he should have thought it proper to take so much superfluous trouble, when he had so long been in the habit of doing everything without hindrance which now was authorised by these new decrees. For a long time past he had caused every one he chose to be arrested, imprisoned, or exiled; he had suppressed writings, expelled the writers, prohibited journals, closed printing-offices, without rendering the smallest account of such proceedings to any one. It is needless here to recall facts which have been already proved; and it is easy to imagine how obscure individuals, defenceless in all save their rights, must have been treated by a man who held a Pope under lock and key, and, through his police agents, expelled even women from Paris who had become obnoxious to him for their independent opinions united to beauty, wit, and genius. Now, however, this power was no longer sufficient for him, and he required that such odious acts of tyranny should appear to be the effect, not of his own will, but of the law.

Even in 1809 he had desired the Council of State to prepare him a Bill for the re-establishment of State prisons. This Bill was drawn up and presented, without being preceded by any preamble. The bare fact was announced in the most concise terms; despotism without any disguise. The Emperor himself shrunk from the impression which such a document would produce, and in the full Council of State gave utterance to a truly sublime sentiment. 'I must,' he said, 'have two pages of

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clauses containing *liberal ideas!*' Here was one of those characteristic expressions which, better perhaps than any of his victories, explain the Emperor's wonderful success, and his extraordinary ascendancy over the French mind. Oh! how well he understood his unhappy nation—ever duped by words, and the never-ceasing prey of every kind of charlatanism! What exultation, and what imprecations, had filled the world on the subject of the Bastille and the *lettres de cachet!* What blood had been shed for its destruction! what enthusiasm lavished on its victors! It was not now the inoffensive Bastille of the feeble Louis XVI which it was sought to re-establish, but eight Bastilles erected and distributed over the whole surface of the Empire, and at the discretion of a suspicious and inexorable potentate. But they were restored in the name of 'liberal ideas,' and that was sufficient to make the entire world bow. Not one protest was heard. No! not even one murmur. The man who had been carried in triumph on the day of the taking of the Bastille, was he not now *Senator Count* Hulin? What more could be desired? was not that the whole aim of the French revolution?

However *liberal* the clauses might be which formed the preamble of the decree regarding the State prisons, they could not ignore the too well-known fact that a large number of political offenders were detained in the prisons of the Empire. But it was not in order to aggravate their fate that the State prisons were now to be opened to them. Far from it! On the contrary, the preamble drew attention to the fact, that if they were given over to the ordinary forms of justice, 'they would be condemned to *capital punishment*.' Consequently, it was with the view to protect them from execution that it was sought to avoid putting them on trial. It was also added that a certain number of such culprits 'could not have been condemned by the Assize Courts, even though they were *certain* of their guilt,' which signified that there were no proofs against them, but that, notwithstanding, it was desirable they should be kept in prison. A third category regarded police officials employed abroad who had failed in their duty, but who could 'neither be

set at liberty nor brought before the tribunals without compromising State interests.' For all such unfortunate individuals as were outside the meshes of the law, it was desired to institute '*legal* and *solemn* forms,' intended to ensure an impartial examination of their cases. Such legal and solemn forms consisted solely in the necessity for 'a decision of the Privy Council' on the subject of each imprisonment, 'based on the report of the chief Judge or of the Minister of Police.' Every year the list of State prisoners was to be brought up to the Emperor, and the detention of each was to be authorised 'at a new Privy Council.'

An annual revision, made by a Council composed of the familiar friends and most intimate servants of the Emperor, was in fact the point to which the guarantees so solemnly granted to the State prisoners had now dwindled. One single fact stands forth clearly from behind all this pretended form of procedure, namely, that the Emperor had the right to cast into prison, and to keep him there, without trial, whomsoever he might please. The decree was none the less proclaimed as a signal favour; and to render the illusion more complete, it was published in the very number of the *Moniteur* which contained the first felicitations from the great bodies of the State on the occasion of the marriage.[1] It was put forward as a bounty to the people, and was viewed in that light. However, these ridiculous arrangements were never observed. The one single article of the decree ever applied was article 28, requiring that there should be eight State prisons, and that they should be established in the Châteaux of Saumur, of Ham, of If, of Landskron, of Pierrechâtel, of Fenestrelle, of Campiano, and of Vincennes—a list which alone shows how the benefit had been extended to every part of the Empire, both old and new.

The decree regarding the press, the censorship, and printing, suggests the same reflections as that on the prisons. It might have been said that arbitrary action once sanctioned by a decree was about to change its nature and to become legitimate, and

[1] *Moniteur* of March 5, 1810.

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that abuse of power when done according to rule appears more respectable than as an exceptional and illegal proceeding. The Press had hitherto been subject to the good pleasure of the Emperor and his police; this was not altered under the new decrees; but it seemed that these abuses, adorned henceforward with an appearance of legality, were to be practised by virtue of a higher authority; to such a degree does respect for the law act even on those who counterfeit it and convert it into a lie. The Emperor was moreover discontented with the use which Fouché often made of his discretionary powers. Fouché was indulgent, partly by nature and partly by premeditation and calculation. Many a time, during the constantly recurring absences of the Emperor, had he saved unfortunate authors from harsh measures, by intentional delay in carrying them into effect. In this he frequently followed his own inspirations, and showed himself capable of maintaining his opinion. The Emperor often accused him, singularly enough, of 'not having sufficient law in his head,' or of wishing to gain popularity at his expense. Certain it is, at all events, that one of the apparent objects of the decree was to withdraw the jurisdiction over the Press from him, in order to give it to the Minister of the Interior; an arrangement, however, which in no wise hindered Savary from taking it back the moment he succeeded Fouché in the Ministry of Police.

In the somewhat long discussion which took place in the Council of State on the draft of the decree, the orators who supported the measure, and the Emperor amongst the number, spoke of the Press as a 'mode of instruction' and a 'social institution,' instead of treating it as a right belonging to the citizens by which they could make known their opinions, express their thoughts, and, if need be, expose their grievances. The Emperor went even further, stating that it was a '*public function*.' Hence it resulted that every one who made use of the Press became a species of official, under the eye and under the control of the State, the instrument and interpreter of its will, and responsible to it. And only by virtue of a patent issued by the State was it possible to publish one's opinions, for

the State possessed the right of stopping and suppressing everything adverse to its interests or which it might deem inexpedient.

The consequence of such principles was the restoration of the censorship in all its integrity. But, with a view to disguise this ill-concealed return to the old *régime*, the Emperor wished the office to be declared *facultative*, that is to say, that every author who should voluntarily submit his works to the censorship, and obtain its approbation by making whatever erasures it might demand, should be secure from any further harsh proceedings. But this term was almost as fraudulent as the *liberal* clauses of the decree on the State prisons; for all writings, no matter of what kind, were none the less subjected to a preliminary censorship, as every publisher was bound himself to call the attention of the censors to every book he was publishing. Moreover, an article of the same decree stipulated that even after the censorship had given its *satisfecit*, the Minister of Police still had the right to seize the work. The decree, in addition, established a Director-Generalship of the book-trade, which was placed under the orders of the Minister of the Interior. Its particular duty was to keep watch over the publishers and booksellers. Portalis, son of the former Minister of Public Worship, and a young Councillor of State, who had made himself remarkable during the deliberations of the Council by the violence of his opinions against the Press, was the Director chosen by Napoleon. The publishers as well as the booksellers were licensed, made to take an oath, reduced to a strictly limited number, required to produce certificates of their good habits of life and manners, and, in short, subjected to a series of incredibly minute declarations and proofs.[1] The penalties for infringement were confiscation, imprisonment, and fine. There was, however, one case in which the law bore but lightly on the publisher and vendor of an offensive work, and the Penal Code had itself taken pains to define the ground for such indulgence; namely, whenever the publisher or bookseller

[1] See in the *Bulletin des lois* the decree of February 25, 1810.

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should consent to give up the name of the author. In that event, they were to be rewarded by the clemency of the law, and were liable to none but the most trifling penalties (Art. 284 and 288 of the Penal Code).

Notwithstanding the state of languor, or rather annihilation, into which the periodical Press had fallen, it could not fail to receive its share in the distribution of Imperial favours. It was surprising, considering the many blows levelled at the newspaper Press since the 18th Brumaire, that any writers were still found to act as editors; and the enormous burdens they endured can only be explained by their small number and by their very trials, which protected them from competition. Not only were they forced to pay from their own pockets the censor who kept guard over them, but it was even from their sources of revenue that the Emperor paid all the pensions which he granted to learned men and men of letters, upon which he afterwards prided himself so much, when he was pleased to enumerate all that he had done for the encouragement of literature, of science, and of the arts. An editor might unexpectedly learn that the Emperor had in some sort mortgaged his paper, by making it responsible for one or more pensions of six, eight, or ten thousand francs; he had, however, but to submit in silence, too happy to be still permitted to live, while by this method, simple as it was economical, this grand protector of literature took his place in history alongside of Augustus and Louis XIV. Moreover, he thereby compassed another object which he must have equally cherished, namely, that of making half the men of letters live at the expense of the other half, of setting them one against the other, of rendering all union and common action between them impossible; in short, of interesting the authors themselves in the debasement of their noble profession.

One blushes to confess that men such as Bernardin de St. Pierre, Chénier, and Monge consented to accept this tax upon the labour of their more humble brethren.[1] In spite of such onerous trammels,

[1] See the return of these pensions in a letter from Napoleon to Montalivet, January 3, 1810.

accepted too with unbounded docility, the political journals which still preserved a small remnant of life, thanks to the moderation of the police, were in the opinion of the Emperor far too numerous and too independent. He decided that in future there should be but one journal in each department, except in that of the Seine, and that that one should be published by the authority of the Prefect and with his approbation. In other words, this was simply decreeing that henceforth there should be no newspapers in France but official ones. Then, somewhat later, it became no longer a question of a tax being imposed on a paper in the form of a pension, but the Emperor handed over the entire proprietorship of the paper itself to some one of his favourites, without in any way indemnifying its dispossessed owner.

Although these decrees, so favourable to the arbitrary action of the Government, were obligatory on authors, they were not so in any way on the power which had framed them. Napoleon never showed the slightest anxiety to shape his conduct accordingly, and this law, like every other, remained subject to his good pleasure. His subjects might find it an increase of severity, but they could discover no guarantee in it, and it was no sooner made public than he hastened to violate it with a cynical and brutal contempt for the rights which he still allowed to exist. A few months had barely elapsed since the publication of the decree, when he ordered the police to seize and suppress the work on Germany by Madame de Staël.

That illustrious woman had recently come to the neighbourhood of Paris to correct the proofs of her book. She resided near Blois; in other words, as Sismondi said, at the *constitutional distance* of forty leagues. She had voluntarily submitted to the formality of the optional censorship. Esménard, the censor, was one of those literary men whom the Empire had taught how to make a large income for himself by oppressing literature; a man of whom Savary could say in his Memoirs, 'I attached him to me, and he has served me faithfully.' This man had carefully examined the work. He had cut out all the suspected passages which his singularly refined sense of servility could find in it. For instance, he had required the

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suppression of such bold assertions as the following: 'Paris is the spot in the world where it is most easy to dispense with happiness.'[1] The sentence had no doubt seemed factious, for it appeared to admit the possibility of not being happy at Paris. The permission to print the book had been given, and an edition of 10,000 copies was coming out, when Savary's gensd'armes seized the whole edition at the publishers, and taking it to the mills it was transformed into cardboard. The sale of the cardboard produced twenty louis, which Savary, with that exquisite tact for which he was so distinguished, transmitted to the publisher in compensation for the loss of his expenses. This right of seizure, even after the imprimatur of the censor had been granted, had in fact been reserved in favour of the Minister of Police, like a last threat for ever suspended over the heads of authors; but the decree of February 5 stipulated that in such cases the Council of State should be immediately called upon to examine the affair. However, there never was a question of referring this crime to the Council. Simultaneously with the seizure Madame de Staël received an order to quit France in four-and-twenty hours. She thereupon wrote to the minister imploring a delay of some days, but expressing at the same time her supposition that she had doubtless been punished for not having made any mention of the Emperor in her book. To this Savary answered: 'You must not seek for the cause of the order I have signified to you in the silence you have observed regarding the Emperor in your last book; that would be an error. *He could not find a place in it which would be worthy of him*, but your exile is *the natural consequence* of the line you have been following for these many years past. *It seemed to me that the air of this country does not suit you*, and we are not reduced to the necessity of seeking for models in the people you admire. Your work is *not French*, and it was I who stopped its publication.'[2]

[1] See in the book on Germany the passages suppressed by the censorship.

[2] Savary's letter, dated October 30, 1810. See *Dix ans d'Exil*, by Mme. de Staël, the Preface to *L'Allemagne*, and the Correspondence of Mme. Recamier. It is necessary to read what Savary says of this episode in his Memoirs, to have some idea of his trickery.

No more need be said of a system when it is proved that a man like Savary, the hero of so many base and foul deeds, found himself in a position to assume this tone of command and contempt towards a woman whose genius was an honour not only to her time and to her country, but even to humanity itself. And what was the new crime of which Madame de Staël was accused? It would be difficult to define it even now, and it is easy to understand that Napoleon should have shrunk from the necessity of explaining in any public document the cause of the blow, cowardly as it was cruel, by which he had struck her. Since the month of September, 1803, the period of her first exile, she had never reappeared in Paris; she had merely come to its neighbourhood when about to publish *Corinne*, but had almost immediately received an order to leave it again. Subsequently she had travelled in Italy, in Switzerland, and in Germany, ever true to her liberal opinions, but never giving expression to them, except in private conversation.

Her book on Germany, full of new views and keen original observation—which in their main points are still true, despite the inevitable changes that time works amongst nations as well as individuals—was for France a real revelation; nevertheless, it was strictly confined to a philosophic and literary sphere, and it is difficult to detect in it even the faintest allusion to politics. It was simply an initiation into a whole world of ideas and sentiments ignored by France. There existed at that time a sort of Chinese wall round our frontiers, not only in commercial but in intellectual matters; and the prohibition against works full of thought, maintained by prejudice as much as by despotism, had impoverished the French mind and rendered it barren. Our literature was dying of languor beneath the twofold oppression of a system that was hostile to all interchange of ideas and of a literary orthodoxy alike narrow and formal, which having long since ceased to extort admiration by the brilliancy of its works, had no longer any means of defending itself except intolerance. It was a state literature, moulded in some sort upon the political society of the day; having its habits, its official forms, its types proper, outside of which it

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did not allow itself to think or to feel. It possessed the uniformity and dryness, and withal the discipline, of an administration. None of the characteristic features of our national mind were to be found in it, for it assiduously reproduced forms which were not alone old, but lacked the life which had once animated them. For this reason the fashionable authors of that day, the Delilles and Fontanes, show marvellous skill in style, but an almost entire absence of inspiration, while neither vigour nor originality exist except in those writers who had breathed foreign air, such as Châteaubriand, Joseph de Maistre, Madame de Staël, and Benjamin Constant. It became necessary for authors to adopt one of two courses; either to go elsewhere or to resign themselves to the elegant commonplaces of the orthodox literature. Did perchance a really gifted mind spring up in so ungrateful a soil, it was at once condemned to the torture of laborious fruitlessness, though bearing within itself all the ambition natural to superiority. Such was Joubert, a man possessing talents of peculiar delicacy, though of a sickly and affected kind, without character, fastidious to the last degree, abhorring the open air, light and movements of the world, incomparable as a dilettante, but a signal failure as a writer.

To open the boundaries of the French mind, and free it from the kind of intellectual prison within which it was shut up, to impart to it new ideas and fresh forms and spontaneous inspiration in poetry, in the drama, in philosophy, or in history, was to present it with the only species of regeneration it was possible to offer; and to restore to it, if not the old originality which had long since vanished, at least as far as possible its creative power. The possibility of this was shown by the magnificent bound it made when the Restoration flung down the barriers which had hindered the exterior air from entering. And it was for this awakening of the national mind that Madame de Staël had wished to prepare us, by initiating us into the intellectual *renaissance* of Germany at the end of the eighteenth century, by revealing to us new types, forms of beauty grown young again, a deeper sentiment of nature, con-

ceptions that were profound despite their eccentricity; in short, all those living springs of imagination and of thought that were called Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Kant, Fichte, and Herder.

It was for having wished to ensure us this benefit that Madame de Staël had been so harshly treated. In that respect Napoleon knew perfectly well what he meant, both in his hatred for the woman who personified all that he most detested in the world,—loftiness of thought, independence of character, nobility and pride of heart,—and in the outburst of brutal anger with which the fine work, whose suppression he had just ordered, had filled him. In truth, every description of emancipation holds its ground; and he who labours to elevate, ennoble, and vivify the spirit of a people, labours by that alone for its future liberty. Germany at that time offered a striking example of this truth. It was to those glorious chiefs of her intellectual *renaissance* that, at the expiration of her long lethargy in the eighteenth century, she owed the first sentiment of her national existence; and that sentiment was so strong as to survive all the blows which Napoleon aimed at it. He had cut Germany into fragments, had driven away or corrupted its sovereigns, destroyed its ancient institutions, and shot its patriots. But the Germans found a second country, so to speak, in their literature; which maintained national sentiment and nourished hatred against the foreigner. The mind remained free beneath the chain which bound the body, and their country rose up again in 1813 more full of life than ever. From this point of view it may be said that a man of peace like Goethe, hostile though he was to all warlike literature, effected more than a whole army for the liberty and the independence of his country.

But it was a gratuitous insult both to truth and genius to make the policeman write to Madame de Staël that '*her book was not French*' because it conveyed consolation to a nation unjustly oppressed. Every page of the book was impregnated by that pre-eminently French quality, generosity; that virtue which France has preserved throughout all her trials, and which has obtained for her the respect of her enemies; the

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sole inheritance, perhaps, which has never been denied to a nation that created chivalry, and originated the crusades, the war in America, and that of our day in Italy. Yes! to the honour of a nation alternately slighted to excess and flattered beyond measure, history can testify that the voice raised in favour of the vanquished, the sympathies which consoled them in their defeats, the hand stretched forth to misfortune with words of hope and encouragement, were to be found in France; nay, even underneath the very sword of the conqueror. In France it was that men exposed themselves to be outlawed in order to show respect to the misfortunes of Germany. Some did not even limit themselves to this kind of generous intercession, and went so far as to deny their past, to take up arms against their mother-country, and voluntarily to sacrifice their memory and their lives to what they considered the cause of mankind. The Germans were the first to remark that Madame de Staël's observations on their national character sinned from being over-indulgent. They pointed out, not without a certain irony, her encomiums on German candour, simplicity, and good-nature, and the various criticisms in which her clear-sightedness was blinded by her generosity. A noble, touching exaggeration of a virtue of which they have since had the opportunity of showing us the true measure! . . . But they have not cared to add this lesson to the many others which they have given us.

The punishment which befell Madame de Staël was extended by degrees to the greater number of the friends who endeavoured to console her in her exile, such as Madame Recamier, Matthieu de Montmorency, Schlegel, and Barante, the Prefect of Geneva, abruptly dismissed for having paid her attention. The day came when, to escape such persecutions, she decided on submitting to the long and painful Odyssey, of which she has left us so touching an account. In this manner was that small society of Geneva dispersed, so interesting for its activity of mind, and one of the last of those circles where men had dared to speak and think freely. In this manner did that hospitable, illustrious, though modest establish-

ment disappear, where all that ranked as intellectual in Europe considered it a point of honour to present themselves; where Benjamin Constant contributed versatility and variety combined with the most rare and faultless accuracy; to which Sismondi brought his solid good sense and his science as an economist and an historian, Schlegel his inexhaustible critical fancy, Bonstettin his caustic humour, Gerando his philosophical mind, Madame Recamier her grace and beauty, and Madame de Staël her grand soul, full of eloquence and inspiration, a sort of ceaselessly vibrating echo, reverberating to the sound of whatever was great and glorious in her age.

By one of those singular coincidences which the historian must never fail to note when they serve to elucidate facts, it was at the very time that Madame de Staël was banished like a criminal and her book thrown into the paper-mill, that a jury appointed by the Institute proclaimed the distribution of the Decennial prizes then recently announced with so much noise, and intended to revive the great ages of literature. The Minister of the Interior, in his *Statement of the position of the Empire*, had said, 'The Decennial prizes are about to be given by the very hand of him, *who is the source of all true glory*.' There can be little doubt that the majority of the laureates must have abandoned their idea of seeking glory from any other source, as an ingenious act of flattery on their parts; for, although a few estimable names appear in the long lists, no single one belongs to a famous or even a durable achievement. Rulhière received a prize for history, Raynouard, Legouvé, Delrieu, Baour-Lormian and Lehoc for tragedy, Duval for comedy, Sainte-Croix and Villers for criticism, Delille for didactic poetry, St. Lambert and Julien for moral philosophy, &c.[1] Such were the authors proclaimed worthy of a public reward, at a time when persecution and insults were showered upon those whose character and talents were an honour to the nation. But posterity, who restores every one to his

[1] See in the *Mémoires de l'Institut* the volume entitled *Rapports* of all the classes of the *Institut de France* admitted to compete for the Decennial prizes, November 1810. The *Moniteur* of July and August, 1810, published long extracts from this *Rapport*.

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proper place, has plunged these names into the most profound obscurity, and has retained no recollection of any except those whom official servility passed over in silence.

The list of prizes bestowed on science presents the great names of Lagrange, Laplace, Berthollet, and Cuvier; truly illustrious characters, and full of merit that was above all reward, but the specific nature of whose labours was such that it could give no umbrage to the reigning power. It is however noteworthy that these eminent men had not only gained their celebrity at a period long since past, but that the prizes awarded to them were for works of a date long anterior to the Empire, of which the latter, notwithstanding, desired to reap the credit. A prize was adjudged to Lagrange for his *Calcul des fonctions*, published in 1797; for his *Mécanique céleste*, of 1798; to Fourcroy for his *Connaissances chimiques*, published in 1791; to Cuvier for his *Leçons d'anatomie*, published in 1802; to Lacroix for his *Traité de calcul différential et intégral*, of 1796; to Lacépède for his *Histoire des poissons*, published 1798; and to Berthollet for his *Statique chimique* of 1803. This fact did not escape the notice of the jury entrusted with the distribution of the prizes, for they rejected various works as too old, but relaxed in severity towards the above-mentioned, either because their authors had added another volume to them, or had published a new edition somewhat revised. It was by a fiction of this kind that Rulhière's history of *L'anarchie en Pologne* obtained a prize, although the author had died *thirty years before*. On this plan they might have gone back to Tacitus, the true historian of that day. They made the riches of the past contribute as much as possible to supply the poverty of the present, with a view to delude the dispenser of all fame into the belief that he was at the same time the inspirer of all talent.

But all these efforts at adulation were completely wasted. Either because the Emperor was struck by the insignificance of his Cæsarean poets, or that he considered his money better spent in defraying the expenses of the war, certain it is, that he abstained from distributing the awards of the jury, and nothing remained of the magnificent institution of the Decennial prizes

but the recollection of a solemn mystification. If Thibaudeau, his apologist, is to be believed, Napoleon declared in full Council of State, 'that his aim in founding them was merely to furnish employment which would prevent men from occupying themselves with more serious affairs.' However, what tends to prove that he considered his triumphal cortége of literary celebrities as rather paltry, is a note addressed to the Minister of the Interior,[1] in which he asks for the reasons why the Institute had not mentioned Châteaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*. It is tempting to infer that he wished to strengthen this select band, fearful that they should make a sorry figure in the eyes of posterity. He could not have liked Châteaubriand ever since his resignation at the time of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, when the *Mercure* of which he was the proprietor was seized, in punishment of too bold an allusion; but he had a natural taste for his florid style, and for the element of exaggeration which pervaded his imagination, and willingly listened to his protectors Fontanes and Molè; and in addition, the *Génie du Christianisme* had the merit of having popularised the title of 'restorer of the altars,' to which Napoleon attached more importance than ever, since he had been at open war with the Pope. Châteaubriand, moreover, had just published his *Martyrs*, in which he reproduces and maintains the Catholic doctrine of the necessity of obeying the powers that be, even when founded on usurpation,—a doctrine which was not likely to displease the Emperor. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand Napoleon's indulgence, and his passing desire to enrol Châteaubriand in the phalanx of official celebrities.

[1] Dated December 9, 181

CHAPTER II.

EXCESSES AND FOLLIES OF THE CONTINENTAL BLOCKADE. ELECTION OF BERNADOTTE TO THE THRONE OF SWEDEN. LAST ANNEXATIONS OF TERRITORY. (*July—December*, 1810.)

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The solemnity for the distribution of the Decennial prizes had found Napoleon in the midst of preoccupations of so grave a nature, that they sufficiently explain his contempt for that useless ceremony. The intolerable vexations of the continental system began to bear their fruits, and events that could not be remedied had taken place. Our allies, driven to extremities, were still restrained by terror, but the peace of Europe was in more serious danger than ever, and secret preparations were making in every direction for a gigantic struggle. When one sees the continental blockade so quickly producing its natural consequences, it is difficult to comprehend how historians have been found to admire so wild a conception, in which it is impossible to detect even any continuous system. We have seen how Napoleon contrived to close the ports, first of France, and then of the whole of Europe, to the English, subsequently to prohibit them to neutrals who should have submitted to the Orders of Council in 1807, and later to all neutrals without distinction, on the pretext that it was impossible to distinguish by any certain sign those who had refused submission to the British toll and those who had not. The result of this prohibition to neutrals was the seizure of the colonial merchandise wherever it was found, and that too by command. Napoleon, however, while taking upon himself to impose these ruinous

prohibitions on his allies, who submitted to them only from necessity, evaded them himself by the system of licences, first applied to certain products, and then extended to all colonial commodities.

Despite his denials to the contrary, these licences did introduce an immense quantity of merchandise into France. But such exceptions created fresh difficulties in the application of the continental system. How was it possible, in the seizures made by order of Napoleon, to distinguish between merchandise of a legal kind, and that brought in by fraud? Moreover, there was in every market a no less considerable quantity which had been sold by auction after the confiscations, or from the prizes taken by our privateers, and which had thus obtained the legal stamp. How were all these to be distinguished from smuggled goods? Napoleon had been struck by another fact, no less important. After the annexation of Holland, he had allowed the Dutch merchants to pass the colonial merchandise in their possession into France, on payment of a tax of fifty per cent, and notwithstanding this excessive charge, they had disposed of their goods with extreme ease. From this he drew the conclusion that the payment of fifty per cent must very nearly represent the expenses and the profits of the contraband trade, and that it marked the limit to which he might with impunity raise the taxes on the other merchandise which he tolerated.

Such, as far as can be seen, was the motive which led to the rearrangement of the continental system effected by the Decree of August 5, 1810. It is impossible seriously to believe the motive alleged by Napoleon in the circular addressed to his agents abroad—namely, the desire to equalise the prices all over the continent. To effect uniformity of the kind, the tax should first have been graduated according to each country. He changed nothing in his prohibitions against neutrals—they who continued to be refused entrance to every European port—but a tax of about fifty per cent was imposed upon all the colonial merchandise existing upon the continent, no matter what might have been its origin; every merchant was bound to declare his possession of such property, and to pay the tax either in money

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or in kind under pain of confiscation of the goods. Napoleon moreover declared that depôts of such merchandise situated within four days distance from the frontiers of the Empire, were considered clandestine, and as such became liable to seizure. He instantly marched French troops to effect these seizures in neighbouring territories, for instance, in Switzerland, in Frankfurt, in Spain, and in the Hanseatic towns, without the slightest regard for the interests of those states. Every European government was requested to conform to this new regulation, in terms so pressing as to amount to menace. Another decree, published under date of October 18, 1810, decided that all English manufactured merchandise should be publicly burnt. And as the ordinary penal laws, however harsh, were considered insufficient to ensure the carrying out of such measures, a third decree[1] established a special jurisdiction with exceptional penalties, for the repression of a crime committed by accomplices in every quarter. Seven *Cours prevôtal*, and thirty-four special tribunals were established, the former to try first offences, the latter more serious cases, against contrabandists, smugglers, or receivers of goods, and to pass sentences upon them of death, hard labour, or fine. But repression was not considered sufficient; the instruments of such repression were also to be encouraged and rewarded; a proportionate share of the seizures was therefore given to the informers, soldiers, and custom-house officials who effected them.

These measures were carried out with the more remorseless severity from the fact of their bringing enormous sums into the Treasury, tenfold more than the deficit which the reduction in the amount of receipts from the Customs had caused in the Budget. The taxes paid in kind by the unfortunate merchants who had to give up half their goods when unable to pay in cash, placed an enormous quantity of property in the hands of the Government, who then sold it on their own account. Nothing was to be seen but soldiers and custom-house officers in every direction, either forcing open the doors of magazines to search

[1] Decree of November 25, 1810.

them and to seize whatever they could there find, burning the prohibited merchandise in the public squares, or hunting those who had allowed themselves to be caught in some infraction of the law. Napoleon might in vain declare through his chambers of commerce, in addresses which they were made to issue, '*that the ashes of these piles would fertilise French soil*';[1] individuals were none the less ruined by them, for, as Mollien has remarked, the loss of the merchandise thus burnt did not fall upon the English, but upon the French. It very much resembled the sight, indefinitely prolonged, of a village handed over to pillage by those who had undertaken its defence; with the sole difference, that these scenes, as demoralising for those who presided at them as for those who were the victims, were protected by the law and incessantly renewed. And for what end was such treatment enforced? What man of sense could believe in the efficiency of the Decree of August 5? How could any one avoid seeing that the tax of fifty per cent placed on merchandise which had already paid a heavy tax for the licences, or that levied on previous seizures, was in reality nothing but a premium given to contrabandists? that it sacrificed the honest trader to the smuggler, who, despite all the different hindrances, always found it possible to bring his goods to market at a far lower price?[2]

But these evils, however insupportable to the public or to individuals, were slight compared to the grave political complications which such measures were beginning to create abroad. Foreign governments had submitted to the continental blockade most reluctantly, in order to escape complete ruin, but from the moment that the blockade brought them equally certain ruin, though under another form, it was clear that they would make every effort to evade it. How, in fact, could they find their

[1] Address of the Chamber of Commerce at Agen. *Moniteur* of February 12, 1811.

[2] This is the opinion of Mollien, Napoleon's minister: 'By an inexplicable contradiction,' he says, 'these taxes gave more advantages to English trade than the prohibition deprived it of.' (*Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor*, vol. iii.)

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way through the maze of contradictory regulations and decrees surrounding this pretended system, the author of which was the first to infringe them, and in which it was impossible to discover one well-connected thought, which, in a word, were but the madness of absolutism? No! although, with the knife at their throat they had resigned themselves to make war on England and to close their ports to her, they never could have undertaken to make war also upon neutrals, to let their people perish from inanition and want, or to obey every caprice of a man who was not bound by his own laws! If they could have made such a promise, it was nullified by the stain of violence upon it, and he was mad to calculate on its being fulfilled, for they possessed the right, and it was their duty not to keep it.

It were possible, no doubt, to understand that the Emperor might cherish such an illusion, if, while himself strictly observing the decrees, he had at the same time offered his allies some compensation for the privations he imposed upon them, by securing to them, for instance, the advantage of a customs union, which would have established an industrial and commercial identity of interest all over Europe. But there was no question of the kind, not even for countries immediately dependent upon him, such as Switzerland and Italy. Whilst sending 6,000 men to Switzerland to seize the colonial merchandise there, he prohibited the woven fabrics and other manufactures of that country admittance to the markets of Italy. He also, by the excessive increase of his tariffs, closed the Swiss and German markets to the silks of Italy, with a view to draw the trade to Lyons exclusively;[1] the effect of which, as Prince Eugène remarked, was to ruin the Italian producers for the advantage of the Lyons manufacturers, who by this act were relieved from all competition.

In view of such facts, one might have said that Napoleon was taxing his ingenuity to increase the interest of every nation in infringing the continental system, for the purpose of

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, August 6, 1810.

finding a pretext in their resistance to justify his encroachments. The fate of Holland was a warning well-calculated to inspire them with salutary reflections. But the facility with which that revolution had been accomplished was at the same time a most dangerous snare to a man so quick to pass from menace to performance, and his enemies had just reason to hope that its success would encourage him to undertake new enterprises no less compromising. The European governments were unanimous in their mode of viewing the new continental measures which so grievously aggravated their situation, but for the most part they were not in a state to enforce their objections. They resisted the measures in proportion to the distance or the force which protected them from their terrible adversary. Prussia was not in a position even to complain; she submitted, in utter despair, without a protest. Denmark had her frontiers but a few marches distant from Davout's head-quarters; she required the Emperor's protection, moreover, against Sweden and Norway, and, in order to support her own pretensions to the succession of the King of Sweden, momentarily abstained from all opposition to the blockade, although it was most prejudicial to her interests. But Sweden, who found herself, in some degree at least, protected by the sea from any attack on Napoleon's part, made every possible effort to evade the application of measures that were a thousandfold more injurious to her than to France, from the inferiority of her own resources; while in so doing she was but following the example set by Napoleon himself. As to Russia, she alone in Europe spoke the language of an independent state, distinctly refusing to obey decrees concerning which she had not been consulted, and declaring her intention to abide by the engagements she had made at Tilsit.

The Emperor had no means of constraint as yet which he could use against Russia, but he was in no humour to tolerate the opposition of Sweden. He would no doubt have adopted instant coercive measures, had an event not occurred of so singular and unexpected a nature as to distract his thoughts for the moment from the channel which had of late so completely

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absorbed them. In the course of that very month of August, in which the grievances of the blockade system had been so deplorably increased, the Swedes had chosen General Bernadotte as successor to the throne of Sweden. This extraordinary event had taken place with the suddenness of a theatrical effect, and had wellnigh baffled even Napoleon's foresight. However, he did not lack a pretext for interfering. Charles XIII, who had been placed on the throne by the will of the nation after the expulsion of Gustavus IV, had, it is true, no direct successor; but he had adopted the Duke of Augustenburg, brother-in-law and heir-apparent to the King of Denmark, and destined in consequence of such adoption one day to restore Scandinavian unity, by uniting on his own head the three crowns of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Unfortunately however for this project, the Duke of Augustenberg was seized with apoplexy while passing some troops in review, and died in May 1810. His death, although from natural causes, was attributed by the people to the partisans of the dethroned monarch; Count Fersen was cut to pieces in a revolt, and the ancient royal family was more strictly outlawed than ever.

The throne of Sweden was thus again without a successor. Charles XIII would have liked to choose the brother of the Duke of Augustenburg as his heir, but found himself so completely dependent on France, that he dared not come to any such decision without the consent of the Emperor. He wrote to him, submitting his choice and asking for his support and counsel.[1] Napoleon preferred another candidate, but would not declare himself openly. He consented to the King's wishes, and gave him his full approbation, at the same time urging the King of Denmark, in an underhand way, to come forward himself as a candidate for the throne of Sweden. That prince did, in fact, take the step of addressing a letter to King Charles openly soliciting the honour of being chosen. Whether rightly or wrongly, he was most unpopular in Sweden, and the simple news of his candidature produced universal excitement and

[1] Charles XIII to Napoleon, June 2, 1810.

displeasure throughout that country. Moreover Désaugiers, our chargé d'affaires, testifies that the antipathy was rather increased than otherwise when it was found by a semi-official article in the *Journal de l'Empire* that Napoleon was favourable to him.[1] Désaugiers however asserts that 'a word from the Emperor would be sufficient to decide everything.' He therefore in all his despatches begged for permission to use that word; but he was left without instructions, so unusual was the disguise to which the Emperor thought it necessary to recur, to enable him to exert an influence which he had so often hitherto abused.

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The King meantime was highly embarrassed by having to choose between a claimant who was odious to the nation and a candidate unpalatable to the Emperor. In this critical juncture that happened, which had often been seen to happen formerly in Italy,—the choice of the nation fell on a stranger. Swedes of distinction had known Bernadotte when our armies were occupying Pomerania. He had made himself popular in Sweden by his consideration for the inhabitants, and had charmed every one who approached him by the amenity of his manners, the vivacity of his mind, and the extent of his knowledge. Baron Mörner, an obscure member of the Diet, was the first who seems to have thought of making Bernadotte a king, and he made him one. He went to Paris, presented himself to him in the name of a party that did not exist, and offered him a crown of which he had no right to dispose. Napoleon knew this and yet continued inactive. Mörner was back in Stockholm, zealously labouring for his candidate, before Lagerbielke, the Swedish minister in Paris, was informed of the intrigue. Champagny, consulted by Lagerbielke as to the Emperor's intentions, pretended, like Napoleon, not to look upon the matter as serious, and to leave the Swedes full liberty of choice—an act of indecision which Bernadotte's partisans were not slow in turning to account.

In the month of August, 1810, the States of Sweden met,

[1] Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Sweden, 294. Despatches of Désaugiers, July and August, 1810.

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Their committee persisted in declaring for the Duke of Augustenburg, who on his side was equally pertinacious in his refusal, when suddenly a secret agent, a former French vice-consul at Gothenburg, arrived from France. A rumour soon spread that not only had Bernadotte accepted, but that he had obtained the consent of the Emperor. All the difficulties with France, therefore, would be smoothed away, and it was felt that he would bring with him not only the political influence of a prince allied to the Imperial family, but the fame of his own military reputation, prosperity, and an intimate alliance between the two countries. The people even went so far as to say that he 'would clear off the public debt with his private fortune.' The name of Bernadotte was thus at once accepted with unbounded acclamation. The King recommended him to the Senate in the most flattering terms; and the States bestowed on him, by a large majority, the title of Prince Royal of Sweden. (August 17, 1810.)

The Emperor no sooner learned the departure of the secret agent entrusted with Bernadotte's interests, than he, on the instant, sent off a despatch disowning him. He caused Désaugiers to be informed 'that he could not believe this individual would have the impudence to say he was entrusted with any mission whatever.' But the disavowal arrived too late. Napoleon, caught in the snare which he had himself laid, was compelled to submit to an incontrovertible fact, and to sanction the good fortune of a man towards whom, for a long time past, he had borne nothing but hatred. However, he found it impossible to conceal his ill-humour from the King of Sweden, rather curtly replying to him when he notified to him the choice made by his States, '*I was little prepared for this news.*'[1] Such was the part, rather involuntary as may be seen, which he took in Bernadotte's elevation, but which in no wise prevented his including him amongst those of whose ingratitude he had most cause to complain. Bernadotte's ingratitude

[1] This unpublished letter of Napoleon's to the King of Sweden is dated September 6, 1810, and is in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 194.

became one of his favourite themes, like the ingratitude of the Emperor of Austria, from whom he had taken the half of his states. A general in the year 1793, and minister of war under the Directory, Bernadotte had himself won all his grades; and, by the services he had rendered under the Empire, despite the persevering malevolence of which he had been the object, and the snares that had been laid for him, he had amply repaid his debt towards the Emperor.

The Swedes, with the rest of Europe, soon learned that the Emperor had resigned himself to Bernadotte's election, but was by no means satisfied with it. The first moment of surprise over, he recommenced his irritating and threatening communications with the Swedish government on the subject of the continental blockade. Giving way to one of his favourite outbreaks of passion towards the Swedish ambassador Lagerbielke, he overwhelmed him with abuse, reproached him with all the infractions of the system committed by Sweden, with the tolerance shown by the Swedish government in regard to the warehouses of colonial merchandise that were established at Gothenborg, and concluded his vehement harangue by saying, 'Choose either cannon balls against the English, or war with France.'

Bernadotte himself answered the Emperor, wishing in person to plead the cause of his adopted country. He wrote him three successive letters showing him the sad condition to which Sweden was reduced in consequence of the annihilation of her commerce, and proved the insufficiency of her means to sustain war, from the dearth of her financial resources. If it were intended to compel her to accept burdens which she was incapable of supporting, it was essential, he urged, to furnish her with the resources she lacked, and which France, more highly favoured, possessed in abundance: 'we offer you arms and iron,' said Bernadotte at the end of his last letter; 'give us in return those means which nature has refused to us.'[1] No

[1] Bernadotte to Napoleon, December 8, 1810—*Recueil des lettres, discours et proclamations* de Charles Jean, roi de Suède: Stockholm, 1858.

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demand could have been more just or more natural considering the situation in which Sweden found herself placed. History records a thousand instances of the kind; but Napoleon treated the overture with cool disdain. He made his minister Alquier answer Bernadotte, 'that he never maintained a correspondence with any royal prince, not even with his own brothers,'[1] an assertion, the utter falsehood of which Bernadotte, as brother-in-law to Joseph, knew better than any one. To assist the needs of Sweden he offered to take a regiment of Swedes and a few hundred sailors into his pay; a derisive offer which Charles XIII did not accept; but in order to evade the blows with which Napoleon threatened him, he consented to declare war against England, rather than to be obliged to declare it against the Emperor. A truly precious alliance for France, and in its solidity worthy of the policy which had prepared it!

With Russia this imperious tone could not be taken, but the calm resistance of the Emperor Alexander having convinced Napoleon of the impossibility of making him bend to his ever-changing will, he was habituating himself little by little to the idea of constraining him by using force, and was preparing with the utmost secresy to pass from words to acts. Alexander had loyally accepted the consequences of his declaration of war against England, and had fulfilled his engagement of closing his ports to her; but he did not consider himself under any engagement to declare war against neutrals, nor to submit to the caprices of his ally. Although it might be difficult to distinguish between false neutrals and true ones, it did not necessarily ensue that the latter did not exist, as Napoleon pretended, and that there was neither an American navy, nor a Turkish navy, nor trading vessels belonging to other nations. Moreover, he was perfectly aware of all the subterfuges by which Napoleon had himself broken the blockade, and he justly asserted an equal right to regulate his own commerce, and to modify his tariffs. Nor did he ignore the negotiations opened with England without his knowledge, through Labouchere,

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, December 23, 1810.

and which Napoleon had taken pains to deny,[1] although he avowed them somewhat later in a public document.

Napoleon soon perceived, from Russia's firm attitude, that he must go to war with Alexander if he wished to make him yield. From the 4th of August, 1810, before he even communicated to him the decree of the 5th of August, he may be seen making his first military preparations against Russia. He points out to the King of Saxony the works to be undertaken in order to make Torgau the depôt for the arms of his kingdom, and the fortifications to be constructed at Modlin with a view to have a bridge over the Vistula,[2] while to Clarke he notes the reinforcements to be sent to Dantzic, to Glogau, to Küstrin, and to Stettin.[3] His requests to Alexander, however, are none the less pressing. He has been informed that six hundred ships, English or neutral, are wandering about the Baltic, in a state of panic, and he adjures him to have them seized, that England may thereby be forced to make peace; for he knows that she is in the last stage of distress.[4] But Alexander remained faithful to his system, by seizing the English vessels, and respecting the neutrals. A month later brought fresh entreaties: 'There were no real neutrals; they were all English disguised under various flags and bearing false papers. They must be confiscated and England will be ruined.' At the same time, while thus soliciting, he is preparing to pass from prayers to threats. His preparations are more active than ever. He fortifies places on the Vistula, draws up for Clarke the framework of an army of 300,000 men for Germany, and of 200,000 for Italy,[1] secretly expedites 60,000 muskets and guns to the King of Saxony, and sends considerable reinforcements to Davout on the Elbe and Rapp on the Vistula.

Napoleon had been some months organising his preparations for war, when he suddenly learned, towards the beginning of

[1] Under date of May 16, 1810.
[2] Napoleon to the King of Saxony and to Clarke, August 4, 1810.
[3] Napoleon to Alexander, October 23, 1810.
[4] Napoleon to Clarke, October 6, 1810.

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December, that the Russians were, on their side, constructing defensive works; not 500 leagues from their frontier, as he was doing, but at about 100 behind it—namely, on the Dwina and the Dniester. He instantly became indignant, and had a despatch written to Caulaincourt, saying that 'it is impossible not to see that these works show bad feeling on the part of the Russians. Do they wish to make peace with England and to violate the treaty of Tilsit? It would be the immediate cause of war.'[1] But these menaces missed their mark. Alexander listened to Caulaincourt's representations with the utmost amiability, and then with minute accuracy enumerated, to the astonishment of our ambassador, the works which Napoleon was himself having executed at Modlin, at Praga, at Sierok, at Thorn, and at Dantzic, besides the consignment of arms and the troops he had sent to the King of Saxony and into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw; he pointed out the eminently offensive character of such military precautions, the purely defensive attitude, on the other hand, of Russia, which was limited to the fortification of a few towns at a distance from the frontier, such as Dunaburg, Riga, Revel, and Smolensk, and to the recal of some troops from Finland and Lithuania; he recounted his legitimate subjects of complaint against France—the Galician cessions, the rejection of the Polish convention, the offensive duplicity with which he had been treated in the affair of the marriage, our new encroachments in Italy and Holland, the bad faith displayed with regard to the continental system by means of the licences, while it was sought to impose its harshest terms upon him. Having finished this statement, he contented himself with appealing to Caulaincourt in a friendly manner to be his judge in the matter: Caulaincourt, a just and upright man, knew far less of our position than did Alexander, and could not help admitting the legitimacy of his grievances, at one moment by his silence, at another by his confused explanations.

However disquieting the subjects of complaint might have

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, December 5, 1810.

been which Napoleon seemed bent on incessantly reviving, instead of trying to make them be forgotten, they were as if effaced in one single day by the new attack on the rights of nations, which struck Europe dumb with astonishment, at the very moment that Alexander was addressing his well-grounded remonstrances to Caulaincourt. On the 10th of December, 1810, in the midst of peace over the entire continent, with the exception of Spain, and without the shadow of a pretext or provocation to allege for its justification, a message addressed to the Senate by the Emperor, informed the European governments that Napoleon had annexed to the Empire the Valais, a part of Hanover, the Hanseatic towns, Lauenburg, the Duchy of Oldenburg, and the whole coast from the Ems to the Elbe. This act, extraordinary even in the author of so many usurpations, was grounded on considerations even more extraordinary. 'The English,' said Napoleon, 'have torn asunder the public rights of Europe; a new order of things governs the universe. Fresh guarantees *having become necessary to me*, the annexation of the mouths of the Scheldt, of the Meuse, of the Rhine, of the Ems, of the Weser, and of the Elbe to the Empire appears to me to *be the first and the most important*. . . . The annexation of the Valais is the anticipated result of the immense works that I have been making for the past ten years in that part of the Alps.'

And this was all. To justify such violence he did not condescend to allege any pretext—to urge forward opportunities that were too long in developing, or to make trickery subserve the use of force—he consulted nothing but his policy; in other words, his good pleasure. To take possession of a country, it was sufficient that the country suited him: he said so openly, as the simplest thing in the world, and thought proper to add that these new usurpations were but a beginning, the *first*, according to his own expression, of those which seemed to him still necessary. And it was Europe, discontented, humbled, driven wild by the barbarous follies of the continental system, that he thus defied, as though he wished at any cost to convince every one that no amicable arrangement or conciliation

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was possible; and that there was but one course for governments or men of spirit to adopt, that of fighting unto death. Marmont in his Memoirs relates, that being in Paris about this period, he went to see his friend and compatriot Decrès, the Minister of Marine, an eminently sensible and intellectual man, and who greatly astonished him. Marmont shared the intoxication then so general, especially amongst the military, and firmly believed in the perpetuity of the Imperial phantasmagoria. In good faith, he believed that that fanciful creation stood on immovable foundations, that we had inherited Roman grandeur, and that a nation so brilliant and so restless, so incapable of governing herself, was destined to govern the world. And the whole of France, like him, so seriously believed this vision, that she continued dazzled and infatuated by it for many long years after the dream had vanished. 'Well, Marmont,' said Decrès, 'so here you are; very happy at having been made marshal. You look upon everything in a bright light. Would you like me to tell you the truth and to unfold the future to you? *The Emperor is mad, quite mad;* he will upset us all, as certain as we stand here; and all this will end in some fearful catastrophe!'

CHAPTER III.

STATE OF SPAIN AT THE END OF THE YEAR 1809. CAMPAIGN OF ANDALUSIA. (*November* 1809—*July* 1810.)

It might have been supposed, from the imprudent manner in which Napoleon annoyed the European governments one after the other towards the end of 1810, that the affairs of Spain—which ought to have been his principal, if not his sole, care—had taken a new and unhoped-for turn; that his armies there had obtained some brilliant victory; that, in a word, he was on the eve of being at length disembarrassed from that exhaustive war, which alone had already cost him more soldiers than all his previous campaigns together. But it was nothing of the kind. In spite of the 400,000 men whom he then maintained in the Peninsula, his domination there had never been less stable, or his name more detested; his generals, in that quarter, never more discouraged, his partisans more downhearted, his enemies more confident.

When, in the month of October, 1810, Napoleon had signed the peace with Austria, and the great masses of the army in Germany were once more at his disposal, every one expected to see them turn back towards Spain, headed by him who had just led them to victory at Wagram. No one in Europe was any longer capable of attempting a diversion in favour of that unfortunate country; all were interested in her fate, it is true, and gave her their best wishes, but they looked upon her fall as inevitable, and resigned themselves to it beforehand. England alone persisted in supporting Spain with 30,000 men, which she kept in Portugal under the orders of Wellington.

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But, notwithstanding the miracles which that little army had effected at Oporto and at Talavera, how could it be supposed possible for it to hold out against the crushing reinforcements which were about to submerge the Peninsula, if the Emperor decided on bringing the soldiers of Wagram thither. The English, like the Spaniards, looked forward to this contingency with dismay; King Joseph longed for it with his whole heart, seeing in it the consolidation of his tottering throne; the army looked forward to it as the termination of their humiliations and of long months of suffering; France, as the preliminary of a more certain peace than that which had just been signed at Vienna.

Napoleon was so deeply impressed with the importance of such a resolve, that he announced his approaching departure for Spain to the Senate, prophesying 'the flight of the terrified leopard' with more emphasis than was exactly becoming. After such a promise, doubt no longer seemed allowable, and as early as the month of November, 1809, the rumour of his immediate arrival was so accredited in Spain, that King Joseph sent some of his officers to meet and welcome him.[1] What those on the one side feared, and on the other hoped, from his presence in Spain, was not merely the undeniable superiority of his genius, but the certainty that nothing would be wanting either in resources or troops for the attainment of a great end; that the jealousies and rivalries which had paralysed the command would be extinguished; that he would operate such great concentrations of troops as there was no force at that moment in Spain to resist, and which should sweep all before them like a hurricane. It was so clearly the Emperor's interest to show himself in the Peninsula, were it but for an instant, that he was every moment expected to appear there. As time passed by, doubts, it is true, began to rise; but for many long months the very uncertainty was sufficient to intimidate and seriously to trouble his enemies.

Whatever may have been his secret intentions in this respect,

[1] Memoirs of Miot de Melito.

there were two facts the evidence of which he could not mistake without imperilling his fortune and his fame. The first was the necessity of finishing at any cost so dangerous a war; one which, during the campaign of Austria, had kept his best troops occupied, and might tie his hands at a moment when he should most need his troops. The second was the impossibility of ending it without devoting to it all his best military resources. For wellnigh two years his finest armies had been engulphed in the Peninsula without having been able to establish his authority over it; he had employed there his best generals, his most experienced veterans, an immense *matériel*, and had succeeded in covering the country with blood and ruin; but the work was no further advanced than on the first day. Although victors in the majority of engagements, our corps d'armée, our divisions, our detachments, were everywhere either held at bay, or blockaded, or neutralised in the positions they occupied, and if Spain was to be subdued, it could only be by some effort far superior to all that had hitherto been attempted.

After the battle of Talavera our armies, far from seeking to turn their numerical superiority to profit by pursuing an enemy who, though victorious, was flying, had remained stationary for some time, as though half stunned by the shock they had received. Wellington had been able to retire, without being harassed, from Truxillo upon Badajoz; after which he pitched his camp between Badajoz and Alcantara, covering the southern frontier of Portugal. He was not himself in a position to undertake anything since the great concentration of troops had been effected around Madrid; all the less since he had been forced to give up the co-operation of the Spanish army, in consequence of disappointments of every kind experienced during the campaign of Talavera. We, on the other hand, when driven out of Portugal, had been obliged to evacuate Galicia, and barely occupied half of Estremadura and of Old Castile; so that over the entire west of the Peninsula we had no control. To the south we had crossed the defiles of the Sierra Morena, and the line of the Guadiana, only to suffer the disaster of Baylen, and had not shown ourselves beyond La Mancha since Dupont's defeat.

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That single blow had lost us the whole of Andalusia, with its magnificent provinces of Seville, Granada, Jaën, and Cordova. In the east we were less unfortunate; for, with success, not however unmingled with reverses, we maintained our possession of Catalonia and Aragon. However, we did not then occupy either the province of Valencia, of Cuença, or of Murcia. In fact, we only held the north of the Peninsula, and even that was disputed by numberless guerillas, who unceasingly harassed our communications. The centre, it is true, was inundated by our troops, but, after all, we were rather encamped there than firmly established.

These unsubdued provinces were protected by natural obstacles of great strength, resulting from the very configuration of the country. At every step we found rocks, torrents, defiles, and precipices, which afforded powerful means of defence to a fanatical population, and to armies that were unsteady in the plain or in a pitched battle, but formidable in minor actions, and wellnigh invincible when fighting in entrenched positions. These provinces, moreover, were defended by fortresses that were so many centres of insurrection, and which we had been too negligent in not capturing. Such were Badajoz and Olivença in Estremadura; Almeida, Elvas and Abrantes, in Portugal; Ciudad Rodrigo in Old Castile; Cadiz and Gibraltar in Andalusia; Mequinenza and Lerida in Aragon; Tortosa, Tarragona, Hostalrich and Gerona in Catalonia, and many other less important places, which however could only be taken by a regular siege. For the last six months Gouvion Saint-Cyr had been ineffectually besieging Gerona, the crumbling rocks of which Don Alvares de Castro, a true hero, defended at the head of a few thousand starving men; and Gerona, like Saragossa, proved of what prodigious endurance and courage the Spaniards were capable when it was a question of defending their towns.

Around this vast semicircle occupied by us in the centre of Spain, and which kept continually contracting towards the north, were grouped our different corps d'armée, facing an almost equal number of Spanish corps, ever ready to re-form

despite their repeated defeats. In Estremadura, Mortier and Soult were observing Wellington; in La Mancha, Victor and Sebastiani watched the passes of Sierra Morena. They knew that in Andalusia the army of Gregorio della Cuesta had been largely reinforced, and was now under the command of General Areizaga, a fiery and presumptuous officer. They consequently expected to see it soon appear beyond the defiles from which the heads of its columns often emerged. In Catalonia and in Aragon, Saint-Cyr and Suchet had to fight Blake and Reding. Suchet, beaten by Blake at Alcaniz, avenged himself at Maria and at Belchite, while he prepared also to besiege the strong places on the Ebro, and unrelentingly pursued the bands of Mina. This was the prelude to his subsequent success, a success due to skilful administration, distinguished military talents, and the good fortune of never having the English as adversaries. In the Asturias, General Bonnet had to fight against Mahy and Baltesteros; while in Old Castile, General Marchand, who had replaced Ney, during his recal to France, had lately suffered a most serious check from Del Parque, at the head of Romana's corps. CHAP. III.

In the provinces of the north, on our direct line of communication, Navarre, Alava and Biscay, the continual passage of our armies prevented the insurrection from employing regular troops against us. This defect, however, they supplied by hundreds of guerillas, who captured our convoys, stopped our couriers, pillaged our depôts, harassed our detachments, killed our wounded and our stragglers, disabled one-third of our effective soldiers before they reached their destination—in a word, did more harm than all the other Spanish armies united. The guerillas—an original and spontaneous production of this war and of Spain, not to be imitated with impunity in circumstances differing from those which gave them birth—had within a few months acquired an immense development. Certain it is, that notwithstanding the great services they rendered, the guerillas have been fatal to Spain, from the habits of brigandage, want of discipline, and anarchy which they

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engendered. Had Spain been opposed to France under the conditions of ordinary warfare, it would have undeniably been better for her never to have had recourse to so dangerous a weapon. But in presence of an enemy who aimed at occupying, not one portion of her provinces, but her entire territory, all regular war—nay, the shortest truce—became impossible. Spain could not choose either hour or means, nor enjoy the benefit of long preparation, or of the precious advantages arising from disciplined resistance. Before thinking of the preservation of order or of certain social principles, it was essential for her to live and to remain a nation. Without the guerillas, she probably could not have achieved this object, for the war in Spain would not have lasted six months, and all the fruits of her long resistance would have been lost to Europe.

The general inaction of our armies was not alone caused by the considerable losses they had sustained, the extraordinary fatigue of the campaigns in Portugal and Estremadura, or the extreme want in which they were living; it arose quite as much from the deep discouragement which had seized its chiefs, the distrust and rancour which divided them, the want of unity of command, and the absence of a recognised and paramount authority. Jourdan had been recalled to France after Talavera, and Soult had replaced him as chief of the staff to Joseph. But the King had not pardoned Soult for his dilatoriness in operating his movement on Plasencia, or for his inertness during the retreat of the English, or for his disinclination to follow any but his own inspirations. Joseph, moreover, was stung to the quick by the merciless rigour with which Napoleon had noted his strategic faults, and discovered his petty dissimulation at the end of the last campaign. The blame and criticisms which his operations had drawn down upon his head were not of a nature to encourage him to resume the offensive. He considered himself misunderstood, nay, almost sacrificed. He felt insulted by the intractable behaviour of the generals, shocked at their exactions which he had no power to repress, and profoundly humiliated by the state of

financial distress in which he was left. His treasury had no resources but the proceeds of the tolls at the gates of Madrid, some paltry taxes collected in the neighbouring provinces, and lastly, a small portion of the sale of the confiscations of which Napoleon had reserved to himself the lion's share. It was by means of such miserable subsidies that he had to feed the army, to pay his guard, his court, and his high functionaries, without mentioning those favourites by whom, from taste as well as from tradition, Joseph was surrounded.

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Such resources were eminently insufficient. Napoleon's system was to pay his troops, but not to trouble himself about feeding them. Hence it ensued that our armies were compelled to live by ransacking and pillaging the country; they had no choice; and while this demoralised the soldiers, it ruined and exasperated the inhabitants. Joseph, with judgement and clearness of sight, perceived that, having regard to the character of the Spaniard, his hatred to foreigners, and his indomitable energy, the subjugation of the country would never be achieved by a system such as this; that, in fact, nothing short of the complete extermination of every man then capable of bearing arms would produce that result. Every robbery, every exaction, gave one man more to the insurrection, and our proceedings could have but one effect—that of perpetuating the resistance for ever.

Himself of a kindly nature, and an optimist, Joseph held such barbarous deeds in sincere horror, and measured their effect correctly; but he made quite as great a mistake as his brother in imagining with credulous vanity that, were he left to himself, he could win over the Spaniards by the sole *prestige* of his generosity, his gentleness, his courtesy, and his liberal and conciliatory spirit. In this he deceived himself quite as much as Napoleon did; but the Utopia of the one was the mistake of a high-minded nature, while that of the other was the error of a lawless spirit which never shrank from the atrocity of the means to be employed, when once he considered them likely to lead to his end. This also can be seen by observation of their opinions when they criticised one another.

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The whole truth can only be known by listening to both, and each excels in discovering the weak points of his opponent's system. But neither the one nor the other would comprehend that there was only one method of settling Spanish affairs, and that was by leaving the Spaniards free to govern themselves as they might please.

In the same degree that the French were discouraged, uncertain, and little hopeful of the future, the Spaniards showed themselves ardent, enthusiastic and bold. Not that their troubles were less than those of the invaders. On the contrary, they had to struggle against difficulties a thousandfold graver, for they no longer possessed either legal government, institutions, or organised armies. They beheld their country a prey to fearful devastation of which they could foresee no end, and they confronted their enemies for little else than to be cut to pieces. But patriotism transformed everything in their eyes; it took the place of all that they had lost, it inspired them with unquenchable hope; and their faith in the final success of their cause was only equalled by their confidence in its justice. Even their political and military faults proceeded, for the most part, from over-confidence.

After having wearied Wellington of their co-operation by boasting, as well as by facility in making promises and not keeping them, they now despised his warnings as the offspring of timidity, and spoke of acting with their own forces alone, marching on Madrid, and driving the French out of the Peninsula. Their greatest want was absence of direction, but though all were suffering from the evil, but few were aware of it. The insurrectionary juntas, which had formed themselves at the outset of the war, had exerted an influence upon the strength and duration of the resistance, which no centralised power could have supplied. But it was impossible to demand from them harmonious operations or decisions of general interest. The need of a higher authority had been felt, and the central junta, formed by delegations from the local ones, sprang from this necessity. It was now found that the central junta itself was insufficient.

Deriving its power from the insurrection, which had little respect for its own work, and lacking any legal title or clearly defined attributes, the central junta fixed at Seville found itself exposed to the jealousy of the local junta of that city, as well as to open resistance on the part of the juntas of Valencia, Estremadura, and several other provinces. Like every assembly which arrogates to itself the executive as well as the legislative power, it had committed many faults. It displayed neither wisdom, nor foresight, nor practical spirit in the military administration, and had shown a greater tendency to declaim than to act. When it did act, its acts were criticised, its decisions discussed, its powers disputed; and before long, conspiracies were hatched against it. Such is the natural and well-merited fate of every government which refuses to ask the nation for a legal sanction to a power that has come to it by the chance of a revolution. The fault thus committed in not imposing on their delegates the obligation of convoking the Cortes was expiated by the Spaniards only by a hazardous anarchy.

This great measure, all the more necessary that the danger had become more menacing, was demanded on every side with increasing energy. But, as always happens on similar occasions, the central junta found every sort of good reason for not resigning its dictatorship. With the sole view of perpetuating its own existence, it alleged various pretexts which did honour neither to its good faith nor its patriotism; as for instance the fear that such an appeal to the nation would check its military ardour, or, that it would cause power to fall into the hands of partisans of the old *régime*, or on the other hand that it might give the control of public affairs to fanatical reformers who would ruin everything by inopportune innovations. It saw no safety or salvation for the country but in its own preservation—outside of that, all was danger. Soon however, frightened at its isolation and unpopularity, and at the conspiracies that were closing around it, the central junta beheld itself forced to yield to public opinion, and to give up a portion of its attributes to an executive commission, of which one of its

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chief adversaries, the Marquis della Romana, became a member. Then, having to admit most reluctantly that its services might some day be dispensed with, it decided on convoking the Cortes in the month of March, 1810. This concession, at once tardy and insufficient, did not induce the public to pardon it for so long an usurpation, and its only reward was universal contempt.

Such was the general situation of Spain when Napoleon concluded peace with Austria, and was called upon by the nature of events, as well as by his oft-repeated engagements, to put an end in person to so fatal a war. He was the more bound to do so, in that he was the sole author and the sole partisan of this criminal enterprise, which had been conceived, prepared, maintained and continued by him in opposition to public feeling, and without the pretext of any national interest. He owed it to the sufferings of his soldiers who were sacrificed for a most unworthy cause, to his own dignity, to the security of his other conquests—nay, even to the fame of his power and of his genius. If he did not feel the force of these motives, he at least pretended to understand them. He no sooner quitted Vienna than he despatched important reinforcements to the Pyrenees, under General Loison, and announced that others, more numerous, would follow under Junot, in all forming a total of 80,000 infantry, and 16,000 cavalry. He sent Berthier to Bayonne, as Major-General, specially to superintend their organisation, and then spread the rumour of his approaching departure for Spain, with the view of intimidating his enemies there by the expectation of so formidable a contingency.

The Spaniards became impatient to act, in order to anticipate this danger. They prepared a grand offensive operation against King Joseph, once more forgetting that, reduced to their own resources, they were incapable of confronting in pitched battle the large masses of French troops assembled on the great plains of Madrid. Many circumstances contributed to make them commit this fault; such as the enthusiasm produced by the success of the Duke del Parque at Tamames, and the hope

entertained by the central junta of regaining its popularity by victory, grounded on the strength and comparative good order of their army of Andalusia, which was the most numerous and the best equipped that had been seen in Spain for a long time past. Wellington, who was then at Seville—on a visit to his brother the Marquis of Wellesley—vainly endeavoured to divert the chiefs of the government from this project. Not only however was his advice not listened to, but with a view to inspire their general, Areizaga, with more confidence, he was officially informed by the central junta that Wellington was to assist him in the campaign.

Nothing, however, was further from the intention of the English general. He had experienced to his cost the audacity, obstinacy, and military ignorance of the Spanish commanders, besides the weakness and lack of discipline of the Spanish armies. In his annoyance, he would recognise no virtue in them except the facility of re-forming after a defeat; he was firmly resolved to accept no common action with them unless on the condition of his dictating orders to them, and having his commissariat well secured. Nor would he admit —although both then and since the opinion has been widely held—that enthusiasm was sufficient to make good soldiers: 'People are very apt to believe,' he wrote on this subject to Lord Castlereagh, 'that enthusiasm carried the French through their revolution, and was the parent of those exertions which have nearly conquered the world; but if the subject is nicely examined, it will be found that enthusiasm was the name only, but that force was the instrument which brought forward those great resources under the system of terror which first stopped the allies; and that a perseverance in the same system of applying every individual and every description of property to the service of the army by force has since conquered Europe.'[1]

The Spanish armies not yet possessing anything but enthusiasm, it was necessary for them, in his opinion, to acquire

[1] To Viscount Castlereagh, August 24, 1809. Despatches.

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military qualifications before undertaking any great operations: 'Large masses, in strong positions, which will give them an opportunity of acquiring a system of discipline, at the same time that the French can do them no harm and will be exposed themselves to the attacks of the Spanish detachments, and of the guerillas, which, under the protection of these masses, and while the enemy's attention would be taken up by them, might operate on their flanks and rear—this is the system which I have always recommended, for which the country and people are particularly well calculated.'[1]

These counsels, dictated by good sense, which, alike in war and politics, is true genius, when combined with rapidity of conception, were disdainfully rejected. The central junta were already discussing what ought to be done when they should have taken possession of Madrid.[2] Areizaga, a young officer, full of courage, but presumptuous and thoroughly incapable, who had been raised to the command as much for his defects as for his good qualities, crossed the defiles of the Sierra Morena with 50,000 men, in the first days of November, 1809. From thence he rushed down into the plains of La Mancha with unparalleled impetuosity. So certain did he feel of victory, that he carried in his suite a troop of actors who were rehearsing a piece intended to celebrate his entry into Madrid.[3] After a slight cavalry combat with our advanced posts at Dos Barrios, he crossed Ocaña, and reached the Tagus near Aranjuez. Then, becoming as hesitating as he had been resolute, and as if astonished at his own audacity, he lost time in useless vacillation, sent one of his divisions across the river, then recalled it, and finally fell back upon Ocaña, where his evil genius seemed to call him.

Soult, after some uncertainty as to the enemy's intentions, had recalled Mortier and the fifth corps from Talavera to Toledo, had made Sebastiani cross the Tagus near Aranjuez, and moreover brought forward the Desolle division and Joseph's Guard

[1] To Col. Roche, October 28, 1809. Despatches.
[2] Torena. [3] Miot.

to that point. These combined forces formed a total of about 35,000 excellent troops. Their flanks were thoroughly protected; the right by the second corps at Oropesa, against any offensive movement on the part of the English, and the left by Victor, who had reascended the valley of the Tagus as far as Fuente Duena. On the evening of the 15th of November the two armies were completing their concentration in the environs of Ocaña, when three brigades of our cavalry suddenly found themselves in the presence of the whole Spanish cavalry. Instead of retiring before a mass of such imposing appearance, they charged it with impetuosity, and scattered it in disorder.

Next day, the 19th, our troops, without waiting for Victor, boldly attacked the Spanish army. The latter had taken up a position at Ocaña, its centre outside the town, its right upon a small hill near Noblejas, its left behind a ravine which was so deep as to shelter it from attack, but, on the other hand, hindered it likewise from making any attack. The forced inactivity to which this portion of Areizaga's army was condemned, allowed Soult to throw nearly all his strength against the Spanish right. He charged it with Sebastiani's cavalry and two divisions of infantry, while Sénarmont thundered against the centre with thirty pieces of artillery. The Spaniards sustained this first attack stoutly, although their cavalry, intimidated by the combat on the eve, was of no avail. The Leval division, decimated by the Spanish fire, had to retrograde, and the general fell severely wounded; but the Spaniards were not allowed time to turn this momentary advantage to account. Mortier, at once pushing forward the Girard division, supported by that of Desolle, which rushed into Ocaña, carrying it at the point of the bayonet, the Spanish line gave way, and its troops dispersed. Sebastiani instantly fell upon the broken ranks with all his cavalry, and making a corps of 6000 men lay down their arms, mercilessly charged the scattered remnants of an army that was then nothing but a multitude seized with panic, flying in all directions. The battle had lasted three hours, and the Spaniards had lost nearly 5000 men killed and wounded;

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and when night fell, we had captured 25,000 prisoners, having lost but 1700 killed or wounded.[1]

Almost simultaneously news arrived that Kellerman had, at Alba de Tormes, avenged the check of Tamanes, and a little later, that the defenders of Gerona, after horrible suffering, heroically endured, had succumbed, owing to Saint-Cyr's skilful arrangements (December 1, 1809). Saint-Cyr, who was in disgrace for having too boldly criticised orders that were sent to him from Paris, had returned to France on the eve of the capitulation of the place, and all the honour of the success was attributed to Marshal Augereau, whose short passage through Catalonia had, however, only been marked by reverses.

These advantages, the importance of which was undeniable, for a time raised the prestige of our arms in the Peninsula. Considerable reinforcements entered Spain daily by the Pyrenees, and larger ones were still expected. At Madrid the destination reserved for them by the Emperor was known. First of all they were to march against the English, to drive them to the sea, and force them to re-embark after having destroyed all their establishments in Portugal. This was the plan he caused to be announced everywhere, and which, it was said, he was to carry out himself, before finishing the subjugation of the Peninsula. But it was almost impossible to calculate on the completion of his preparations, or, consequently, upon his arrival in Spain, before the middle or the end of the next spring. Between this and then could not something else be undertaken by that army which had just destroyed at Ocaña, and with such ease, the last regular troops possessed by Spain, and the only rampart of Andalusia? The Emperor unceasingly complained of our inaction. On the 11th of November, 1809, he writes to Joseph: 'No more news of what is being done in Spain! And yet, with so large and good an army,

[1] Soult, in a letter on the subject of this battle (dated November 22, 1809), calculates our loss at not more than 150 killed and 150 wounded. But this must be regarded as nothing but one of those bulletin falsehoods, which had become traditional in our army. Mortier's report is much truer, and he calculates our loss at 1200 men.

and in the face of enemies who are so little to be feared, how is it possible that more progress is not made in our affairs?'

Joseph was sensitive to these reproaches. The victory at Ocaña, for which he assumed to himself all the credit, had shed fresh lustre on his military talents, rather undervalued after the battle of Talavera. His troops had recovered their ardour, but were dying of hunger, like the Court itself, amidst provinces fearfully exhausted by this interminable war. And yet two steps off there was abundance for every one, in the rich plains of Andalusia, covered with industrious and opulent towns, the resources of which were still untouched. Why not seize Andalusia while waiting until they could undertake the campaign in Portugal. What was there to fear, now that the army of Andalusia was destroyed? He knew from the very Spaniards themselves that the government of the central junta had tired out every one, and that many towns were disposed to submit in the hope of ending such a state of anarchy. Moreover, it was most improbable that there was any cause to dread a diversion by the English, as they had allowed Areizaga to succumb, and would likewise be held in check by a corps d'armée left on the Tagus. The conquest of Andalusia, therefore, would be a mere military promenade, while it would throw the other provinces into a state of the utmost discouragement. In short, the prospect pleased every one—Soult[1] especially, who was wearied by Portugal and his encounters with the English. Joseph consequently wrote to Napoleon, submitting the project to him, and sending him his aide-de-camp, Clermont Tonnerre, with orders to give the Emperor every explanation he might desire.

One consideration alone amongst this number was of a nature to influence Napoleon—the one, in fact, grounded on the important resources to be found in Andalusia. Keenly alive as a rule to this species of argument, he was, at that particular moment, meditating a reduction in the subsidies he

[1] Soult to Clarke, December 14, 1809.

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granted his brother, frequently repeating that the expenses of the Spanish war were ruining his exchequer. But to a military genius like his, an advantage of this description could not for a single instant be weighed against the inconvenience and danger, from a strategic point of view, which an expedition to Andalusia presented.

The Emperor knew Spain well enough, after an experience of two years, to be aware that the great difficulty was not so much the invasion of the country, as how to keep it. They might advance into Andalusia as they had done before; of that no one could doubt who knew the strength of the expeditionary army. But then it would be necessary to occupy and to defend a vast territory situated at such a distance from our centre and from our lines of communication, and to devote numberless troops to this purpose, which though sufficient for themselves, could never be of the slightest assistance to the other corps d'armée engaged on the more essential points of the Peninsula. Moreover, at the extremity of Andalusia stood Cadiz, a fortified town, the siege of which alone would require a whole army. Was it possible to subdue it in reasonable time? Was it wise to employ such a force at the extremity of Spain, when the English were threatening the country at its very heart?

It seemed impossible for such palpable objections to escape Napoleon's genius. Even his enemies could not allow that he would commit such a fault. 'His first object will be to attack Portugal,' wrote Wellington on the 14th of November, 1809.[1] However, he answered Joseph's proposal simply by silence. One word from him would have sufficed to stop everything, but that one word he abstained from pronouncing up to the last. The riches of Andalusia made him forget the dangers of the expedition, and he allowed that to be done which he did not wish to order. He wrote to Clarke and to Berthier every day on the affairs of Spain, and gave them the most minute instructions about the reorganisation of the corps d'armée, but his

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, November 14, 1809.

letters do not contain one single observation on the expedition to Andalusia.

After fruitless efforts to obtain the desired authorisation, King Joseph took silence for consent, and the expedition was resolved upon. It had been begun for upwards of a month, when a letter from Napoleon was received, dated January 31, 1810, containing, it is true, very excellent advice as to the precautions which should be taken against a movement by the English. 'There is nothing dangerous in Spain but the English,'[1] said the Emperor, after having criticised the plan of campaign. But such retrospective disapprobation could no longer stop an enterprise that had been inspired by want of foresight, tolerated by cupidity, and which was to have the most disastrous results.

Joseph's army was composed of three corps commanded by Marshals Mortier and Victor, and General Sebastiani, with Soult as chief of the staff. It also comprised a reserve placed under the orders of Desolle. The second corps, now commanded by General Reynier, had been left in observation in the valley of the Tagus, in the neighbourhood of Talavera. The army arrived at the foot of the Sierra Morena towards the middle of January. The principal defile of these mountains, that which passes by Despeñas-Perros, La Carolina, and Baylen, afforded most admirable posts for defence, but which could be turned on two sides—on the right by Almaden and Gaudalcanal, on the left by San Esteban. Under these circumstances, something more than the disheartened remnants of Areizaga's forces was required to defend this barrier, albeit a strong one, against an army of 70,000 men led by experienced generals. Sebastiani therefore marched by San Esteban, and Victor by Almaden, while the principal corps, under Soult and Mortier, advanced upon La Carolina. In view of these arrangements, the Spaniards, convinced of the impossibility of arresting our advance, retired after some insignificant fighting, though not without having left many prisoners in our hands.

On the 22nd of January the three corps d'armée had effected

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, January 31, 1810.

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their junction on the Guadalquivir, from Cordova to Andujar. From thence Sebastiani turned off to the left upon Jaën, which immediately surrendered. He then took possession of Granada, after defeating Areizaga, who was pursued into the kingdom of Murcia, where he had to give over his command to Blake. Meanwhile Joseph made a triumphal entry into Cordova, and the 30th of January found him at Carmona, a few leagues only from Seville. Here an important question suggested itself to the chiefs of the army. Ought they to bend their steps to that capital, or would it be better to leave it on one side, and march straight to Cadiz, which was a far more important place, and which they might perhaps succeed in taking by surprise?

It was doubtless known that the defences of Seville could not stop us for any length of time, that a portion of the inhabitants were well-disposed towards us, from hatred of the now thoroughly contemptible central junta, and that the fall of Seville would produce a profound impression of discouragement. But it was also known that unless Cadiz were in some sort carried by assault, notwithstanding the canal which separated it from the mainland, it would be most difficult to take it; and furthermore it was known[1] that a Spanish division, commanded by the Duke d'Albuquerque, was on the way to the assistance of Andalusia, that it had crossed the Sierra Morena, almost on the same line as Victor's corps d'armée, had already reached Carmona, and was hurrying on by forced marches to Cadiz. Despite the ground which Albuquerque had thus gained upon us, it might still be not impossible to overtake him on the road, perhaps even at the very gates of Cadiz, in which case an attempt could be made to enter the town pell-mell with him.

Whether this supposition were right or wrong, it was the only chance of surprising Cadiz, and it was our duty to attempt it. A council was held at Carmona, and the generals were divided,

[1] This is evident from Soult's letters to Berthier of January 25 and 31, 1810.

but Soult's opinion decided the balance in favour of the march on Seville.[1] According to his view, the moral effect produced by the capitulation of Seville would bring about that of Cadiz. 'Let them answer for Cadiz to me, and I will answer for Seville!' he exclaimed in reply to the entreaties of General O'Farrell, who tried to divert him from this project.

Up to the last moment the central junta had maintained the wildest delusions amongst the inhabitants of Seville. Even as late as the 20th of January, when our advance guards were already on the Guadalquivir, they announced, by a proclamation placarded throughout Seville, that there was nothing to fear, and that Areizaga was about to stop us in the Sierra Morena, while Del Parque would fall upon our flanks. This assurance notwithstanding, the members of the junta did not fail to prepare for departure to Cadiz. When the French army appeared before Seville there was no choice but to surrender. Then for the first time the popular intellect, ever slow in such cases, discovered that declamation and action were two very different matters; that the members of the junta were not heroes because they were unceasingly talking of conquest and death, though they never left their houses; that their incapacity and presumption, their noisy and restless inertness, their absurd plans of campaign, had been the principal, if not the sole cause, of all the deplorable disasters of the past twelve months; that although their obstinacy in postponing the elections might have arisen from an ill-founded conviction that they alone were capable of saving the country, it also might have been due to the perverse ambition of preserving, contrary to the wish of the nation, a dictatorship which had never been con-

[1] Soult, according to his custom, did not fail to throw the blame of this on others, but on this point we have many proofs which seem conclusive; first his own, though in a doubtful form, it is true: 'It is probable that Seville will bring Cadiz with it,' he wrote to Berthier on January 27. Then there is Joseph's testimony, which is very affirmative, and is contained in a letter addressed to the Duchesse d'Abrantes, dated August 29, 1834; that of Miot, who followed the army, and who, in general, is very exact; and lastly, that of Marshal Jourdan, who speaks from the accounts given by generals.

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ferred upon them by any legal mandate, and of which they had not known how to make any but the most wretched use. Their systematic falsehoods, their pretended victories, their cynical acts of despotism committed under the name of liberty, were now recalled; and they were accused of having shamefully speculated upon the misfortunes of the country for their own private interests. Popular hatred, implacable in its justice, because it generally succeeds blind favour, sought them out in their very homes; some were arrested and subjected to the worst treatment, but by far the greater number had fled at the first sign of danger.

King Joseph made his entry into Seville on the 1st of February, after a feeble show of resistance, which was not long continued, as the inhabitants felt that it would only entail the destruction of the town, without effectually stopping our progress. Although the French were justly execrated in Spain, Joseph's character was known and appreciated. All were aware that the dream of his ambition was to make himself beloved by his subjects. He was consequently received at Seville almost as a liberator, so much had the government of the junta there rendered itself odious and contemptible. No conquest ever took place under happier auspices. 'One might consider the war as almost ended,' writes Soult to Berthier on the 3rd of February. 'The expedition hitherto had been nothing but a triumphal march across magnificent plains and under the finest sky in the world. Our soldiers had abundance of everything, the inhabitants were full of civility towards us, the war contributions were duly paid, and King Joseph was radiant.'

In this state of ecstasy he drew up the most ridiculous proclamations, one moment declaring in Napoleonic style 'that resistance was useless, since unchangeable destiny had decided the fate of Spain,' in another promising the Spaniards 'to erect a third pillar of Hercules' to the memory of those who had 'reconquered for France her natural allies.' He fondly fancied that he had invented a new method of making war, which consisted in seducing and charming his enemies by the grace and amenity of his proceedings, in place of brutally attacking

them in the old style by showers of cannon-balls. Sebastiani had also entered Malaga almost without striking a blow. Joseph persuaded himself that owing to the *prestige* he had now acquired in Andalusia, a simple summons to surrender would be sufficient to induce each fortified place to submit. At the same time therefore that he sent Victor's corps d'armée forward to march upon Cadiz, he despatched Mortier to the Guadiana to summon Badajoz, wrote to Ney, who had then returned to Old Castile, to summon Ciudad Rodrigo, and desired Suchet to make a demonstration of the same description against Valencia.

The news of the resistance of Cadiz was the first blow which undeceived him in the midst of his beautiful dream. Despising the orders of the central junta, which tried to attract him to Seville, where he would have been caught without profit or advantage to any one, Albuquerque had clearly perceived that Cadiz was the one single strategic point of importance in Andalusia, and that at any cost he ought to save it. Thither therefore he marched, day and night, without allowing himself to be diverted from his object, effected the entrance of 10,000 men into the town and thereby rendered an incalculable service to the Spanish cause.

Surrounded on almost every side by the sea, joined by a narrow lagoon to the Isle of Leon, which is separated from the mainland by a deep and wide channel, protected by formidable defences, provisioned by an invincible fleet, and defended by a large garrison destined soon to be supported by a strong English contingent, the town of Cadiz was wellnigh impregnable, and might defy every effort of the army of Andalusia. The members of the central junta who had taken refuge there, were at once replaced by a Regency composed of five members. This Regency obtained extensive powers, and was commissioned to govern while waiting for the approaching convocation of the Cortes. The defence was then vigorously organised, and when Victor appeared before the place, and had fruitlessly summoned it to surrender, he could do no more than invest it until he was in a position to undertake regular siege operations.

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The resistance of Cadiz was the final term of Joseph's prosperity; from that date everything began to fall from bad to worse. He almost simultaneously learnt that Suchet's summons to Valencia, Ney's to Ciudad Rodrigo, and Mortier's to Badajoz, had in no wise supplied their lack of siege artillery, or produced any more effect than that of Victor at Cadiz. These marshals had all to withdraw after a species of bravado unworthy of real generals, and their failures did not contribute to render them better disposed towards Joseph. Moreover, at that same moment, Napoleon had struck his brother a blow which he felt a thousandfold more keenly. Joseph was persuaded that he had converted the Emperor to his ideas upon Spain, and his favourite plan of conquering it by gentle means, when a decree was communicated to him, issued on the 8th of February, 1810, by which all the provinces situated to the north of the Ebro were formed into military governments, independent of the royal authority, and subject to the control of the Emperor alone. The governors-general of those provinces, Suchet, Augereau, Reille, and Thouvenot, were invested with all the rights of sovereignty, including the levying of taxes and of contributions for the pay and maintenance of the army. The monthly subsidies granted to Joseph were at the same time reduced to 2,000,000 francs. Soon afterwards, other decrees deprived him of all influence in the direction of the armies. Masséna was made commander-in-chief of the army in Portugal; Soult, that of the army of Andalusia; while Joseph was limited to the command of the Desolle division, under the derisive title of Army of the Centre, and thus found himself despoiled of all control over the military operations, as he had already been of all political authority.

In a military sense this innovation was intended to facilitate the work of the conquest, by dividing its labour. Napoleon attributed the faults and misfortunes of the campaign of 1809 to the system of one sole direction personified in Marshal Jourdan, without being willing to admit that those faults and misfortunes were due far more to a lack of unity than to excess of centralisation; for Jourdan had been thwarted incessantly, at

one moment by inopportune orders from the Emperor, at another by the resistance of the generals. To multiply commands and responsibilities was not the way to diminish the evil; and direction even of an inferior kind, provided it were in the hands of one person, was of far higher value than the greatest talents, accompanied by divided action.

From a political point of view, the decree of February 8 was the preliminary to a definitive annexation of the provinces of the Ebro to the Empire, an annexation destined, said the Emperor, to indemnify him for the expenses and sacrifices he had made for Spain! After having given Spain to his brother, he took it back from him piece by piece, to defray the expenses which that same donation had occasioned him; then, recognising that Joseph also had a right to some compensation, he offered him Portugal in exchange for the Ebro provinces! In this fashion, in this dismemberment, in this singular chaos, in this endless mess of words and things, were all the solemn declarations as to the independence and the integrity of Spain to end! Another motive, no doubt, for the promulgation of these projects, the bearing of which no one could mistake, was a desire to prepare the public mind of Europe for the annexation of Holland, the Valais, and the provinces of the Elbe and Weser. It would be difficult to believe in such madness, if it were not expressed at length in King Joseph's correspondence with the Emperor. On the 9th of September, 1810, Napoleon wrote to Champagny instructing him in a few days to 'inform the Spanish Minister *that I wish to have the left bank of the Ebro as an indemnity for the money and for all that Spain has cost me up to this present moment.*' Thus, by a perversion of ideas which at first looks like a terrible bit of irony, the Spaniards in his eyes were transformed into his debtors, and were under obligations to him, for the advances he had made to them in the form of so many massacres!

Joseph returned to his capital towards the middle of May 1810, sore at heart, and uttering the most bitter complaints, speaking on every occasion of sending in his resignation, but

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never having the courage to act up to his words, although encouraged to do so by his most intimate advisers.[1] He wrote letter after letter to the Emperor, and sent him his two ministers d'Azanza and Almenara, successively, in the hope of inducing him to reverse his decisions. He was now no more, he wrote, 'than the *concierge* of the Madrid hospitals.' He beheld himself abandoned by the majority of his attendants, whom he could no longer support. Personally he had no other ambition than that of withdrawing into private life, 'but he deplored the change which had been effected in his brother's feelings, and *the gradual dissipation of an immense fame*. . . . . I very much fear,' he added, 'that your majesty does not see the end of this terrible convulsion.'[2] From time to time real exclamations of grief escape him on the painful position in which he has been placed, and on the cruelty of prolonging 'the *sorrowful agony* of a brother upon the throne of Spain?'[3]

Napoleon did not trouble himself with answering these letters, which in his eyes were merely importunate lamentations. He did not even deign to receive Joseph's ministers, except at very rare intervals, and they never obtained from him any real concession. To clear himself before the Spaniards from the suspicion of having had any share in the decree which broke up their country, Joseph indulged in a thoroughly platonic kind of revenge by himself dividing the whole of Spain, including the provinces beyond the Ebro, into departments. But his subjects showed him no gratitude for such useless respect to their national integrity. A disguised contempt was his only reward, and Joseph resented their ingratitude with an amount of grief and of confidence in his own good intentions not less ridiculous than it is touching. Writing to his wife, he says, 'I hope that posterity may one day pity a great nation for having misunderstood the King which in its bounty Heaven has bestowed upon it!'[4]

[1] See on this subject the Memoirs of Miot de Melito.
[2] Joseph to Napoleon, August 8, 1810.
[3] Ibid. August 10, 1810.
[4] Joseph to Queen Julie, November 8, 1810.

However this may be, the expedition into Andalusia proved to be only another great mistake added to all the faults which had already been committed in Spain. It procured us enormous resources, it is true, especially at the outset, and afforded a kind of momentary revival to a monarchy that was dying from inanition; but its sole result, from a military point of view, was to paralyse an army of 70,000 men, who might have been much more usefully employed on other points, in those combats by which the fate of the Peninsula was decided. Having conquered Andalusia with such ease, the army had the utmost difficulty in keeping it. There was no choice between evacuating it completely, which would have been a slur, or remaining there in some sort as prisoners, on pretext of possessing it. Our soldiers seemed to hold Andalusia, but in reality it was Andalusia which held them. From 25,000 to 30,000 men were required before Cadiz; almost as many were needed to keep back the insurgents of Ronda, to mask Gibraltar, and to hold at bay the armies of Murcia and Valencia, commanded by Blake; a corps of observation was, moreover, essential on the side of Badajoz, besides garrisons in the principal towns, with a division in the Sierra Morena and La Mancha. So difficult a task would fully try the powers of the army in Andalusia, as became clearly apparent when Masséna required their help.

CHAPTER IV.

TORRES VEDRAS. MASSÉNA AND WELLINGTON. MASSÉNA'S RETREAT. FUENTES DE OÑORO. (*August* 1810—*June* 1811.)

WHILE the foregoing events were taking place in the south of the Peninsula, Wellington made no move in support of the Spaniards. All that he had been able to do for them was to remain as long as possible on the Guadiana, so as to hold back one corps of observation in that quarter. Although assailed by the most pressing entreaties, he refused either to run the risk of losing his small army for Areizaga in a campaign undertaken in opposition to his advice, and of which he had foretold the unsuccessful issue,[1] or to attempt a diversion in Old Castile in favour of Andalusia. In that region he would have to fight Ney, Kellermann, and Regnier, whose combined forces were far superior to his own, without mentioning the large reinforcements which were then pouring into Spain. 'I am perfectly aware,' he wrote on this subject to Bartle Frere, 'of the advantage which the general cause would derive from the movement of the British army into Castile, if it be true that the enemy's reinforcements have not yet entered Spain. I should doubt, however, the truth of the report, which states that only 8000 have arrived, both on account of the time which has elapsed since they passed Paris, and because the enemy has hitherto acted with so much caution that I do not believe he would incur the risk of collecting at the Sierra Morena the large

[1] He predicted Areizaga's defeat in a letter to Col. Roche dated November 19, 1809.

force which has lately been collected in that quarter, if the near approach and the expected early arrival in Castile of the reinforcements did not remove all chance of danger from this measure. But these conjectures respecting the probable period of the arrival of the reinforcements would not prevent me from making a movement into Castile, if the enemy was not at the present moment in greater strength in that province than I can bring into the field.'[1]

Independently of these motives, dictated by his superior foresight, Wellington might have alleged the danger of leaving Lisbon uncovered, and also of compromising plans as yet unknown, although so famous hereafter, to which he justly attached the salvation not only of Spain and of the English army, but even to a certain point of the European cause itself. Since Austria had laid down arms by signing the peace of Vienna, and had thus proved the inefficiency of England's last allies—since among the sovereigns of the Continent Napoleon boasted none but courtiers or subjects, Wellington saw that all the resources and all the efforts of his gigantic power would be turned against the only country which still struggled for the liberty of Europe. What could Spain achieve with her bands of insurgents and her defeated armies, albeit so persevering? or the small English army effect against so formidable an adversary, aided by the combined forces of so many nations? But during the very time when the world looked upon all as lost, and Napoleon's proudest enemies were growing weak, Wellington never despaired of the cause he had embraced. Far from allowing himself to be cast down by the magnitude or the imminence of the danger, he derived from that very circumstance, not only the resolution of fighting to the last extremity, but also the energy to conceive and to execute a project which will continue to be the admiration of the world, and an everlasting lesson to nations oppressed by foreign rule.

He had always thought that some day, sooner or later, the whole of Europe would rise against Napoleon's tyranny,

[1] Despatches: Wellington to Bartle Frere, January 30, 1810.

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provided that an opportunity for such a rising were afforded to it by a prolonged resistance in certain points. The end to aim at therefore was, in his opinion, not so much to drive the French out of the Peninsula, as the tacticians of the central junta wildly fancied, but rather to keep the contest there alive at any cost, until the moment should arrive for so inevitable and universal a revolt. In view of the new invasion pouring into Spain, he could not dream of undertaking any offensive operations against the French. Even if conducted with genius, they would have rapidly exhausted his very limited forces. His small army, though brave, strong and well-disciplined, being maintained at the almost invariable figure of 30,000 men, and obliged to submit to the admixture of auxiliaries that were almost valueless, could not have lasted a month amidst the large masses of French troops then in Spain. He therefore resolved to entrench it in strong positions, rendered still more formidable by every resource of defensive warfare, where he might defy superiority in numbers and the risk of surprise, where he could also obtain supplies by sea, and whence if necessary he might embark in case of disaster; where, also, he might take advantage of the distances and the difficulties of communication which were so rapidly exhausting our troops, by creating around us a desert in which we should find it impossible to live. To stand out under these restricted but vigorously conceived conditions, and to resist with indomitable obstinacy until Europe, ashamed to let him succumb, should come to his succour, was the only course which afforded Wellington some chance of success in view of the feeble means at his disposal; and such, with equal firmness and decision, was the one he now adopted. The necessity which suggested it to him in no wise diminishes the merit or originality of an operation which was, one may say, without precedent in military history.

The position he was seeking for he found in the environs of Lisbon, in the peninsula formed by the Tagus at its entrance to the sea. Protected on almost every side either by the ocean or the river, which at this point is nearly as wide as an

inland sea, this peninsula was accessible only on the north where it joined the mainland. There, however, the prolongation of the Sierra d'Estrella presented a series of rugged heights, craggy precipices and deep ravines filled with torrents, forming a true natural barrier, the strength of which had already struck more than one military observer. In 1799 Sir Charles Stuart, and later the French engineer Colonel Vincent, had made plans of the ground, for the formation of open works, but not of a fortified enclosure.[1]

Wellington was the first who conceived and executed the project of transforming the whole peninsula into a colossal fortress, of more than a hundred miles in circumference. He desired that this fortress should be composed of three concentric enclosures, defended by cannon, and large enough to contain not only his army and the Portuguese allies—comprising the regular troops, the militia and Ordenanzas—but the whole available population of the Southern provinces of Portugal, with their harvests, their cattle and their provisions, so that the country surrounding Lisbon should offer no resource whatever to the invaders. He at the same time secured his retreat by means of a spacious and fortified port, in which, should any untoward accident occur, the English army and even the Portuguese troops might embark in safety. This immense citadel extended to the north from Zizembre and the heights of Torres Vedras, which protected its front, as far as Alemquer; thence to the east by Sobral and Alvera it followed the counterforts of the Estrella which overhang the Tagus, and extended to Lisbon, where it was covered alike by the mouth of the river and by the ocean.

Notwithstanding the strength of this position, it is clear from a note addressed by Canning to the Marquis of Wellesley, and from Lord Liverpool's correspondence with Wellington, that the English Cabinet for a long time entertained a marked preference for Cadiz, which no doubt was still more impregnable. But, without in any way denying this advantage, Wellington persisted in his project of defending the lines of Torres Vedras.

[1] Napier, Peninsular War.

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First, because Cadiz could defend itself, and two centres of resistance were of more avail than one; secondly, because from Torres Vedras he could advance more easily into the heart of the Peninsula, or, on the other hand, retire from it, as we now occupied Andalusia. Lastly, a much larger army might be held in check there than at the island of Leon, which could be invested with comparatively few troops.[1]

Since the truly disgraceful issue of the Walcheren expedition, —which had cost England so much both in men and money, besides the loss of her influence abroad,—the English Cabinet had in part been renewed by the admission of Perceval, of Lord Liverpool, and Lord Wellesley, the elder brother of Wellington. Nevertheless it continued excessively timid, chiefly owing to its weakness in Parliament. The anger of the opposition at the mismanagement of the war had produced a reaction in the public mind, which fell severely not only upon Chatham and Castlereagh as the authors of that unfortunate expedition, but even on Wellington himself, although he had been overpowered with titles and national rewards. Not to expose himself, to leave nothing to chance, to avoid every doubtful action, was the invariable burden of the song, unceasingly repeated by a ministry which felt that Wellington's first check would drive them from office; it was equivalent to ordering the general never to fight. Although he had his brother in the cabinet to support his views, and knew better than any one else the true value of prudence, Wellington was irritated by the constant obstacles which encumbered his every act. Lord Liverpool wrote to him on the 10th of March, 1810, 'Your chances of successful defence are considered here by all persons, military as well as civil, so improbable, that I could not recommend any attempt at what may be called desperate resistance.'

Such in fact was the prevailing opinion. Wellington answered him, saying: 'Whatever people may tell you, I am not so desirous of fighting desperate battles; if I was, I might fight one any day I please. . . . . But I have looked to the great result of our maintaining our position in the Peninsula; and have not

[1] Despatches: Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 1, 1810.

allowed myself to be diverted from it by the wishes of the allies, and probably of some of our own army, that I should interfere more actively in some partial affairs; . . . . and I have not harassed my troops by marches and countermarches, in conformity to the enemy's movements. I believe that the world in the Peninsula begin to believe that I am right. . . . . All I beg is, that if I am to be responsible, I may be left to the exercise of my own judgment.'[1]

But he was more sensitive to the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens, and felt it bitterly though he disdained to complain. 'I see,' he writes to Lord Liverpool, 'that the Common Council of the City of London have desired that my conduct should be inquired into, ... I cannot expect mercy at their hands, whether I succeed or fail; and if I should fail, they will not inquire whether the failure is owing to my own incapacity, to the blameless errors to which we are all liable, to the faults or mistakes of others, to the deficiency of our means, to the serious difficulties of our situation, or to the great power and abilities of our enemy. In any of these cases I shall become their victim; but I am not to be alarmed by this additional risk, and whatever may be the consequences, I shall continue to do my best in this country.'[2]

From the beginning of the month of October, 1809, with the aid of Colonel Fletcher of the Engineers, he had employed thousands of workmen and peasants, without [illegible] in throwing up intrenchments, constructing redoubts, and forming sluices for inundating the plain. He also induced the Portuguese Regency to enforce the old military laws which permitted it to arm the whole population, and distribute pikes to those to whom no muskets could be given. According to an official return of April 1810 the population armed with pikes alone amounted to 219,040 men, a large portion of whom afterwards received muskets, in addition to the 105,000 who had already obtained them. The regular Portuguese army, organised by

[1] Despatches: Wellington to Liverpool, April 2, 1810. See Supplementary Despatches, vol. vi and vii, Letters from Liverpool to Wellesley.

[2] Despatches, January 2, 1810.

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Marshal Beresford, commanded and greatly improved by English officers, amounted to 30,000 men; the remainder consisted of militia recruited in the towns, and of the *Ordenanzas*, or levies of peasants. These troops, though not very formidable on a field of battle, were thoroughly capable of defending the entrenchments.

The Regency had to enact other decrees in order to oblige the inhabitants to move with all their effects within the lines. Although this was more or less a harsh proceeding, it was after all less onerous to them than the certainty of being despoiled by the French army. Wellington at the same time recommended that the *gentlemen* should be requested to stay in the country itself, and form a germ of revolt,[1] and he ordered the destruction of the bridges and the mills on all the streams, excepting at such points as were necessary for his own operations. Lisbon had to submit to the strictness of military rule. A fleet, composed of a large number of frigates and transports, lay under the forts of St. Julien to ensure the retreat of the army; and lastly, the subsidy granted to Portugal was increased at Wellington's request to nearly five-and-twenty millions of francs, not including the pay and commissariat of the army, the expenses of which he liquidated with the most rigorous exactness.

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[1] Despatches: Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 1, 1810.

ever prepared or better merited his success, no one ever wrested it more obstinately from blind fortune. 'If we can maintain ourselves in Portugal,' he wrote to a member of the Portuguese Regency, 'the war will not cease in the Peninsula, and if the war lasts in the Peninsula, Europe will be saved. I am also of opinion that the position I have chosen for the struggle is good, that it is one calculated by its nature to defend the very heart (*l'âme même*) of Portugal, and that if the enemy cannot drive us from it, he will be obliged to retreat, in which case he will run great risk of being lost, and at all events be forced to abandon Portugal.'[1]

When he wrote these prophetic lines, so long anterior to the event, the English general was a very minor personage compared to the Master of Europe, but it was he who represented moral force as opposed to the brute force of numbers and overweening power. He had on his side, not only the goodness and justice of his cause, but also superiority in effort, in foresight, prudence, and discernment, in great results achieved by small means, in the most calm and inflexible resolve, in the very elements, in short, which above all else ensure victory. By these too Wellington has earned the renown of having struck the most decisive blow against Napoleon's overwhelming power. The war of Russia was, it is true, the determining cause of his downfall, but without me and of Colonel Fletcher of the Engineers penetrated so thousands of workmen and peasants, without intermission, throwing up intrenchments, constructing redoubts, and forming sluices for inundating the plain. He also induced the Portuguese Regency to enforce the old military laws which permitted it to arm the whole population, and distribute pikes to those to whom no muskets could be given. According to an official return of April 1810 the population armed with pikes alone amounted to 219,040 men, a large portion of whom afterwards received muskets, in addition to the 105,000 who had already obtained them. The regular Portuguese army, organised by

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[2] Despatches, January 2, 1810.

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to that one amongst our generals who, next to himself, had ranked as our first warrior, ever since an iniquitous sentence of banishment had deprived France of the services of Moreau. Masséna had the utmost repugnance to an enterprise of which he very keenly appreciated both the difficulties and the dangers. He entertained no illusions with regard to the Empire and its false grandeur. Born in 1758, and older than the majority of his companions in arms, he considered that he had earned a right to repose by his glorious military services; and his constitution, worn out by so many campaigns and so much fatigue, was beginning to feel the first symptoms of old age. He yielded, however, to Napoleon's entreaties, promises, and flattery, and accepted, though unwillingly, a mission the sad mistakes of which he only partially foresaw.[1]

Masséna was to have under his orders the corps of Ney, Junot, and Regnier, amounting together to 70,000 men. He was to be reinforced later by about 20,000 men, sent from the north under the command of General Drouet, and by Mortier's corps d'armée, which, coming from Andalusia, was to enter by the Alentejo, and to join him on the left bank of the Tagus. But this was not all, for Napoleon desired that so soon as Masséna should have entered Portugal, the army of Aragon itself should move to his support. Suchet had just ended the sieges of Lerida and of Mequinenza brilliantly, and was about to begin that of Tortosa. The instant Tortosa should have surrendered, he was to leave half his army with Macdonald, who had just replaced the inefficient General Augereau in Catalonia, and to march with the other half as far as Valladolid, where he would be able to support Masséna's operations.[2] Of all these forces, however, Masséna had actually at his disposal only the three corps d'armée, and of all the reinforcements so liberally promised to him, he never received more than from seven to eight thousand men under the orders of Drouet. But the important fact was that Masséna had started.

[1] General Koch: Mémoires de Masséna.

[2] Napoleon to Suchet, July 14, 1810.

Once engaged in this perilous adventure, he would doubtless find some means of extricating himself from it with honour. As to the rest, Napoleon had his mind made up regarding the English army. Wellington had in all, at the very outside, but 24,000 men; for the Portuguese were of no account, and how could it be supposed that such an army could withstand 70,000 French led by the conqueror of Zurich and Rivoli? Nor did he wish any one to hurry. They had allowed the spring to pass without opening the campaign; the summer should be employed in besieging Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and the expedition should be delayed until after the great heats. '*I do not wish to enter Lisbon at this moment*,' wrote Napoleon when sending instructions to Masséna, 'because I could not feed the town, the immense population of which obtains all its subsistence by sea'[1]—a very uncommon instance of solicitude, which proves his extraordinary illusion, but which was less meritorious than he imagined!

Besides the fault he committed, first, by not coming to Spain, which deprived him of the opportunity of obtaining correct information as to the Peninsula, then, by permitting the campaign to be made in Andalusia and thus losing precious time, of which the English took advantage to fortify the lines of Torres Vedras, and lastly, by having created in Spain several detached commands that were incapable alike of sufficing singly or of giving each other mutual support, Napoleon in addition made a grievous mistake in giving Masséna two lieutenants disinclined to obey him; the one, because he had a temper that harmonised with no one but the Emperor—which was Ney; the other, because he had already held the chief command in Portugal, where he was now to serve in a subordinate position—namely Junot. When the Marshal reached Spain, these two generals had invested Ciudad Rodrigo with 50,000 men, while Regnier had taken post at Alcantara on the Tagus. From the outset of his command Masséna was obliged to use the authority and to show the orders of the Emperor to induce them to continue

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, May 29, 1810.

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the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo instead of at once beginning the campaign against the English. These dissensions were almost instantly known to the enemy. 'It is said here,' wrote Wellington to his brother Henry Wellesley, then Minister at Cadiz, 'that the French generals have all disagreed, and that Masséna is generally detested by them.'[1] Masséna at the same time perceived that his army was far from having the necessary resources in equipments, ammunition, or provisions, and that the Emperor's favourite maxim, that 'war must feed war,' was difficult of application in a country exhausted by incessant devastation.

Masséna employed the months of June, July, and August, 1810, in completing his preparations for the campaign of Portugal, and in besieging Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida. The former was heroically defended by Andrea Herrasti, a veteran of the Spanish army. With a feeble garrison he resisted for upwards of two months every effort made to capture the place by 50,000 men. Wellington was at Celorico, some distance off, lying in wait for a favourable opportunity to succour the town. Andrea Herrasti sent him imploring appeals to advance, and he was full of admiration for the intrepid old man: he wrote to him, it is true, and warmly encouraged him, but avoided giving him any formal promise of help.[2]

The Marquis della Romana also came to Wellington's camp, and entreated him to make some attempt in favour of the besieged. He was the one amongst all the Spanish generals for whom Wellington had most esteem and sympathy, and his own best officers united their entreaties to those of Romana. Nevertheless Wellington allowed the place to fall, without attacking the French. And this resolution must have cost him all the more, since it not only caused him to be accused of treachery by the Spaniards and disapproved of by his friends, but furthermore exposed him to the scoffs of our army and even of Masséna

[1] Letter of June 19, 1810.

[2] Wellington to Andrea Herrasti, June 6, 1810.

himself. The English general, however, had at that time only 33,000 men at his disposal, including not less than 14,000 Spanish-Portuguese troops.[1] He had been obliged, moreover, to detach nearly one half of his forces under command of Hill to check Regnier's corps on the Tagus, and had very little cavalry to oppose to ours, which amounted to nearly 10,000 horse. Had he with so small a force attacked an army of 50,000 men in the open country, where no surprise was possible, he would inevitably have exposed himself to a check, in undeniable proof of which may be noted the earnest desire then entertained at our head-quarters that he should embark in such an enterprise.[2] The defenders of Ciudad Rodrigo no doubt deserved that such risk should be incurred, were it only through respect for their endurance; but Wellington knew that the first disaster of the kind would bring orders from the British Cabinet to embark his army, and from that moment Portugal would be lost and all his plans upset. He consequently refused, and uncomplainingly endured accusations, reproaches, and sarcasm, leaving the onus of his justification to the future, with a courage that is more rare and more difficult than that required for the greatest military exploits. He behaved with the same apparent impassibility during the siege of Almeida, although the command of that town was entrusted to an Englishman, General Cox.

Though for long uneasy as to Napoleon's plans, Wellington began to recover confidence when he perceived that the effective strength of our army in Portugal scarcely exceeded the 70,000 men confided to Masséna, and that Soult, moreover, could not quit Andalusia: 'The French will soon discover,' he wrote to Crawford, 'that they are not strong enough to blockade Cadiz and to attack us at the same time in Portugal.'[3] This was in a word condemning the whole nature of the fault we had committed in occupying Andalusia. From the incoherence of

[1] Despatches, June 20, 1810.
[2] Masséna to Berthier, July 2, 1810.
[3] Wellington to Crawford, June 20.

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our doings in Spain, he had divined the misunderstanding that existed between Napoleon and his brother Joseph, and congratulated himself upon the results which must ensue therefrom. 'There is something discordant in all their arrangements in Spain,' he wrote to his brother Henry Wellesley. 'Joseph divides his kingdom into *préfectures*, while Napoleon divides it into departments. Joseph makes the expedition into Andalusia and the siege of Cadiz, while Napoleon creates the army of Portugal for Masséna. . . . It is impossible that such measures can have been done in concert.'[1]

Towards the middle of July 1810 a secret document of the highest importance fell into his hands, thanks to the guerillas who intercepted all our communications. It was an official return, entitled, '*Position of the troops of the French Empire at the date of June* 1, 1810.' From the study of this paper he learned the stations occupied by our army in every dependency of the Empire as well as the new enterprises in which Napoleon was engaged, and drew the conclusion that the only troops which could be displaced without inconvenience and consequently sent to Spain, were those then occupying the town of Nantes.[2] These latter in fact formed the corps d'armée which Drouet was to bring to Masséna, and were the only reinforcements that eventually entered Spain. Such a discovery finally gave him confidence, and he watched the advance of his illustrious antagonists into Portugal without apprehension, so soon as the fall of Almeida, caused by the explosion of a gunpowder magazine, allowed the French to begin more active operations.

Masséna commenced his march on September 16, 1810. His troops were already reduced by at least 10,000 men, by the losses and fatigues incurred at the sieges, by illness, by the garrisons he was compelled to put into the two places he had just captured, and by a detachment which it was necessary to leave on the road in order to collect the soldiers who were quitting the hospitals and to facilitate our com-

[1] To Henry Wellesley, June 11, 1810.

[2] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, July 18, 1810.

munications.' Badly informed as to the state of the roads he had to traverse, Masséna confined himself to following the English along the line they had themselves taken, by Celorico, Vizeu, and the left bank of the Mondego. It was the very worst road he could have chosen. Not only was it completely in ruins, but near the point where the Sierra Alcoba approaches the counterforts of the Sierra Estrella, it presented, as will be seen later, a most dangerous narrow spot of inextricable difficulty. The army carried with it fifteen days provisions, which had been collected with great trouble. Everywhere on its passage it found the bridges destroyed, the villages abandoned, the fields devastated, and, in Wellington's words, 'An enemy behind every stone.' By ransacking the country, the soldiers at last found wine, and some corn still standing, as well as maize, chestnuts, and a species of eatable gland,[2] but nowhere any traces of inhabitants. 'We are marching across a desert,' wrote Masséna; 'women, children, and old men have all fled; in fact, no guide is to be found anywhere.[3]'

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The peasants of the Ordenanza however had not fled, and they harassed our marauders and our stragglers, and even carried off one of our colonels. Masséna, in accordance with a disgraceful practice commenced in Italy and applied by Napoleon himself in Germany, published an order enjoining that all who were taken should be shot as brigands, a cruelty which was one day to be turned against ourselves, when in our turn we learned the humiliation of defeat and invasion. The lesson which Masséna received on this occasion from the English general cannot be too much known, for there is no nation that has not an interest in defending the eternal rights of patriotism. It deserves record all the more because, while bearing the impress of that lofty spirit so gratifying in warriors, it contains

[1] From the report of the position under date of September 15, Masséna's army counted 61,000 men *present under arms*. See the *Journal histor. de la campagne de Portugal* in 1810–1811, edited from the papers of General Fririon, Chief of the Staff to Masséna.

[2] The *Intendant Général* Lambert to Berthier, Sept. 23.

[3] Masséna to Berthier, Sept. 15.

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amidst all its severity the most delicate flattery of him to whom it was addressed.

Masséna had replied to a first remonstrance by the pretext usually alleged in defence of this species of violence—that the peasants wore no uniforms. 'Those whom you call peasants without uniforms, and highway assassins,' Wellington wrote to him, 'form the Ordenanza of this country. They are a portion, as I have already had the honour to assure you, of the paid military corps, and act under military law.' It seems that you require, in order to be admitted to the enjoyment of the rights of war, that every one must wear a uniform; *but you ought to remember that you yourself added to the glory of the French army, when commanding soldiers who had no uniform.*'[1] Masséna had shown himself much more humane in Spain than our other generals, as Wellington himself has remarked. His correspondence is exempt from that declamatory style of bravado then the fashion in our armies, and shows largeness of mind, with much strength and simplicity. Hence he was capable of understanding language which though courteous was at the same time severe, and the truth and justice of which it was above all impossible to deny. Nor is it certain that beneath the uniform of an Imperial Marshal he did not sometimes heave a sigh of regret for those days of poverty, youth, and glory in which he fought for his country instead of risking his life for the caprice of the most exacting of masters.

'I am sorry,' added Wellington, 'that your Excellency should feel some personal inconvenience from the fact of the Portuguese quitting their homes on the approach of the French army. It is my duty to make those retreat whom I have not the means of defending. Moreover, the orders which I have given to this effect were scarcely necessary, for those who remember the invasion of their country in 1807, and the usurpation of the government of their Prince, at a time of perfect peace, when there was not a single Englishman in their country, will find difficulty in believing your declarations that you are making war only on the English.'

[1] Wellington to Masséna, Sept. 24.

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On the 26th of September the army, continuing on the bank of the Mondego, reached the narrow end of the kind of funnel through which that river passes before traversing Coïmbra. On one side the Sierra d'Alcoba, on the other a craggy ramification of the Estrella, gradually advanced upon the narrow space, followed by the road and the river, until they formed a gorge from which troops could not possibly escape. The English army occupied all the heights from Busaco to Puente de Murcelha. The position was formidable, but it was necessary either to force the passage or to retrograde as far as Vizeu in order to debouch upon the Vouga, which would have been by far the best plan, but which now seemed a disgrace not to be thought of. The attack, consequently, was resolved upon, despite the objections of Ney, who considered success impossible from the moment that no attempt had been made to take Busaco by surprise. Masséna's army still counted nearly 60,000 men, while the Anglo-Portuguese troops consisted of not more than 50,000, but their inferiority in numbers was compensated for by the strength of this impassable barrier. It was useless to think of passing by Puente del Murcelha, the heights of which were crowned by intrenchments,[1] so that the efforts of our army were concentrated against Busaco. During the whole day of September 27 the corps of Regnier and of Ney fought desperately on the abrupt slopes of the mountain. More than once our regiments, charging with irresistible impetuosity, reached its uneven crests, but, having arrived there, were received with deadly fire by batteries skilfully placed, while reserves of infantry forced them by bayonet charges down the ravines they had succeeded in crossing. The heights were covered with our wounded and our dead, amongst whom Generals Merle and Graindorge, several colonels, and a large number of officers, were killed. Not one of our divisions, however, succeeded in establishing themselves on the summit. In the evening, despite our efforts, desperate although somewhat confused, as must always happen on

[1] Masséna's report to Berthier, Oct. 4, 1810.

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such uneven ground, it became evident that we could not hope to force the position. We had lost 4,500 men killed or wounded, while the Anglo-Portuguese had scarcely lost 1,200.[1] Moreover, as their able general had foreseen when he decided upon defending the position at Busaco, this first success had redoubled their confidence: 'The French must either carry the post or die of hunger,' Wellington exclaimed to Stuart on the very evening of the battle.

There was a third course, the possibility of which Wellington did not seem to contemplate, for a general like Masséna,—that of retreating. And he would have had to adopt that course, no matter how much it might have cost him, but for the unhoped-for discovery, when least expected, of a small mountain pathway, by which the Sierra d'Alcobal could be crossed a little to the north by the Col de Caramula. This pathway, which, happily, was practicable for artillery, descended upon Sardão and the road of Coïmbra, and consequently turned the English positions.

Masséna hastened to send forward our troops by this path during the whole of the 28th, while feigned attacks occupied the attention of the enemy in front. Before long the whole army was able to complete its movement upon Sardão. Wellington has frequently been reproached with not having understood the importance, nor even suspected the existence of this Caramula road, which rendered his victory useless. But such an accusation is refuted by the simplest examination of his correspondence, for not only did he order Colonel Trant to occupy Caramula with his militia, which was sufficient to guard a mountain road, but on the 21st of September, when writing to General Cotton to inform him of his intention of giving battle, he adds: 'Hill, unfortunately, is a day behindhand, *and there is a road to our right by which we may be turned and cut off from Coïmbra.*' Trant's absence from so essential a post was due to one of those chances which so often occur in war. At the very moment when the order was despatched to him, he had been called off in another

[1] Wellington's report, Sept. 30, 1810. General Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna.*

direction by the general commanding at Oporto, and when he returned to Sardão, our troops were already there. Wellington has been more justly reproached[1] with not having taken advantage of our movement to attempt an attack upon our flank, which might have had a great chance of success; but it is probable enough, judging from all his conduct in other matters, that he had powerful motives for not undertaking it. The result of the victory of Busaco, especially from a moral point of view, was none the less valuable to him, for it had to an extraordinary degree inspirited and emboldened the Portuguese auxiliaries, who hitherto had been so unreliable, but who on this occasion behaved with the utmost steadiness alongside his own troops.[2]

Our army regained all its customary confidence in consequence of the successful manœuvre which had caused the fall of the defences of Busaco. They felt convinced that they were about to approach Lisbon, and march to the very extremity of the Peninsula, certain this time of meeting the English where they could retreat no further. On their road they passed through the town of Coïmbra, which was given up to pillage. Masséna was obliged to leave his sick and wounded there, with a detachment to guard them, amounting altogether to 5,000 men, which reduced his army to 55,000. On the 8th of October, 1810, our advance-guard, under command of Montbrun, arrived at Santarem on the Tagus. On the 10th it entered Villa Nova, a short distance behind the enemy's rear-guard, with which it had frequent skirmishes, when, all of a sudden, the latter disappeared as if by enchantment, and nothing remained in front but an impenetrable line of fortified heights stretching away to an extraordinary extent.

[1] Napier, Peninsular War.

[2] Wellington's report. The *Moniteur*, which had hitherto published all Masséna's bulletins, abruptly stopped their publication. It transformed the sanguinary check at Busaco into a victory, in which 'the English had been attacked, turned and quickly pursued.' The combat of Busaco was a mere feint in order to turn the position, and we had only lost 200 men killed. (*Moniteur* of Oct. 20 and Nov. 23, 1810.)

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The army in fact had arrived at the foot of those lines of Torres Vedras, now so famous, but the existence of which, up to that moment, they had not suspected. Masséna himself had never heard them spoken of except vaguely at Coïmbra, and knew nothing either of their strength or their extent. And, more inexplicable still, Napoleon, who was situated at the central point for information of all descriptions, and had his agents in England and in the whole of Europe, was only now for the first time about to learn the existence of those immense works, upon which, for upwards of a year, so many thousand men had been employed. Masséna caused reconnaissances to be made during the next few days, along the whole of the enemy's line, but they only served to convince him more fully of the strength of those impregnable entrenchments.

The villages in every direction were covered by abattis, the valleys closed in by redoubts, the plains inundated by dams across the torrents. The information which was gradually elicited from prisoners and from the very few inhabitants who had not fled, still further increased the feeling of stupefaction produced by the aspect of such formidable works. Masséna learnt that at about two leagues behind this line, a second and much stronger one existed, where the army would be certain of shelter should the first be taken; that between the two were large table-lands, where the whole of the Anglo-Portuguese forces could be concentrated on any given point, at the first signal from the numberless telegraph posts established on the heights; lastly, that still farther back, behind the second line, a third barrier rose serving as a citadel to this colossal fortress, and strong enough to protect the whole army during such time as might be required to enable it to embark in safety. No definite and complete report of the defences of Torres Vedras exists, but there is an official paper, drawn up a few months before the completion of the works, which gives a sufficiently clear idea of what they must have been at the time our troops reached them. From this it appears that in the month of June, 1810, the defences then finished or in course of construction, comprised a total number of 127

redoubts, mounted with 511 pieces of artillery, and containing about 32,000 men, exclusive of the army of operation.[1] This latter numbered 30,000 English and 35,000 Portuguese, soon to be joined by 10,000 Spaniards under the orders of Romana, and forming a total of 75,000 men, without counting the militia and the Ordenanzas.

This overwhelming discovery, combined with the difficulty of procuring provisions, the interruption of communications entailed by the taking of Coïmbra, and the loss of the 5000 men left there, produced a most disastrous moral effect upon our army, but in no wise abated Masséna's courage. In this moment of supreme peril, although stopped short by insurmountable obstacles, far from all support, surrounded by enemies, deprived of provisions, and badly seconded by lieutenants who were jealous of his authority, he never flinched. He again appears in the grand character which had made him famous when defending Genoa. Silencing the objections of some and the murmurs of others, he extorted admiration from his adversaries by his unshaken resolution. Without for an instant admitting the possibility of retreat, which would have been equivalent to abandoning Portugal, he decided that the army should remain in presence of the English positions, until reinforcements from Napoleon would allow him to attack them with advantage. Until then, no attack could be dreamt of. Singular ignorance of facts alone can have led to the supposition that an audacious *coup* would have had any chance of success. Wellington's views on this subject are quite sufficient to prove this, especially as no one was less inclined, in general, to exaggerate his own advantages.

The constantly recurring opinion expressed in all his letters is to the effect that the French forces were utterly insufficient for the attainment of their object. Writing to Admiral Berkeley on the 17th of October, he says, 'I am firmly of opinion the enemy cannot succeed; but as I know that their situation is desperate, we must expect that there is no risk they will not

[1] Report by Lieut.-Col. Fletcher, R.E., to Wellington, June 25, 1810.

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incur to attain their object, and I know enough of operations of this kind to be aware that nobody can be certain of their result.'[1] Ten days later he wrote to England that the arrival even of Mortier's corps caused him no uneasiness, and that he was surprised that Masséna had been able to hold out so long, considering his utter want of provisions.[2] And in truth this constituted his greatest difficulty, resulting from the system, alike barbarous and improvident, by which our armies were not allowed to possess magazines, or ever to pay for their food—in presence of an enemy who scrupulously paid for his; to live upon requisitions, or in other words by rapine; for the contributions in kind which were regularly paid for in the towns, became in the country parts nothing but fearful pillage.

Happily for us, Wellington's orders had been only imperfectly carried out in the Beira and Alentejo districts, and the French detachments who ransacked the country in every direction for fifteen or twenty leagues around, still found some provisions in that neighbourhood. But these were in general torn from unfortunate peasants who had taken refuge with their families on the mountains and in the woods, and were thus left to die of hunger. Such scenes of violence, constantly repeated, demoralised our soldiers and developed true habits of brigandage amongst them. Increasing scarcity of provisions gave rise to savage and cruel behaviour, which however had long since ceased to be considered disgraceful in the army. On this point we possess the testimony of a witness above suspicion, who took part in this frightful war in Spain, and even received his command from Masséna's own hands. 'Detachments,' writes Marmont, 'were formed in each regiment for the purpose of exploring the country and carrying off whatever they could find. If they met a Portuguese, they seized him and put him to the torture, to force him to reveal the places where provisions were concealed.' Hanging for shorter or longer periods, till the face turned red or blue—called *au rouge* and *au bleu*—were the first methods.

[1] Despatches. [2] To Lord Liverpool, Oct. 27, 1810.

If these failed the torture was continued till death.[1] Such was the system of civilisation employed by Napoleon at the very time when he was compelling his Senate to call him the 'Regenerator of Spain.'

Such atrocities sufficiently proved the wisdom of the English general in advising the Portuguese to bring all their provisions within the lines. It cannot be disputed that his orders, though apparently harsh, were in reality most salutary for the inhabitants and most disastrous for the French. Had they been strictly obeyed, Masséna could not have remained one fortnight in front of Torres Vedras. The Russians, in the systematic devastation by which they opposed Napoleon during their retreat in 1812, were only applying Wellington's method. That method was the only efficacious manner of combating the convenient but dangerous habit, which our armies had contracted, of drawing all their sustenance from the invaded country, and living at the expense of the inhabitants. It was a terrible but victorious reply to the savage axiom that 'war ought to feed war.'

Meanwhile the English general, although he did not suffer behind his lines from the same difficulties in feeding his troops, who were provisioned by sea, and though he had every reason to be satisfied with the state of his army and the excellent spirit of his officers, who varied their military labours by shooting and fishing,[2]—had no less serious annoyances to contend with, caused by the Portuguese Regency, and by the ever-increasing uneasiness of the English Cabinet, with whom he found it impossible to reason.

The Regency had always hoped that Wellington would succeed in keeping the war on the frontiers of Portugal, and ever since the capital had been menaced, lost no occasion of annoying and thwarting him, or showing him ill-will. The Patriarch of Lisbon and the Principal Souza were the hottest of his insensate opponents. At one time they accused him of temporising, at another found fault with his harsh orders, although they were

[1] *Mémoires de Marmont*, vol. iv.

[2] Lord Londonderry: Story of the Peninsular War.

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essential to the carrying out of those measures in the Alentejo, which had been effected in the other provinces; or with the privations which had been imposed in the common interest of all, or again with the supplementary works which he had executed on the left bank of the Tagus. More than once Wellington had reason to fear disturbances in Lisbon. He succeeded, however, in imposing silence upon Souza, by threatening to have him transported beyond the seas, and before long orders arrived from the Brazils, where the Regent had taken refuge, which made the members of the Portuguese Government perceive the necessity of submitting to the plans of the English general. On the other hand, the Liverpool-Perceval ministry, whose existence was endangered by a return of the king's insanity, recommended Wellington to be more cautious than ever; while the newspapers and some of his own officers reproached him for not attacking Masséna's enfeebled army.

He admitted that he could do so with great chance of success. But he also knew by our intercepted correspondence that Masséna was most anxious to be attacked; and in the event of any check, which might of course occur, he would by such an act open a road for the French across his lines to Lisbon and the ships, and all would then be lost. Why should he run such a risk when he was sure of succeeding in time without in any way exposing himself? Moreover, as he remarks with perfect justice, his aim consisted less in driving the French out of Portugal than in exhausting their forces to so low a point as would enable him to strike them effectually. Until then, what would be the use of making them evacuate certain provinces? It would simply oblige them to make some large concentrations of troops against which it would become impossible to struggle. The provinces which they had evacuated, when once freed from their presence, never again took part in the common cause, a fact of which Galicia was a striking proof. It was far better to keep their forces scattered in a manner that would wear them out, and leave the guerillas to act against them. 'It is certainly astonishing,' he added, in concluding

these acute observations, 'that the enemy has been able to remain in this country so long;' and Masséna's situation he considered as 'an extraordinary instance of what a French army can do.'[1]

Towards the middle of November, Masséna having completely exhausted all the resources of the ground upon which he had encamped, and finding his position becoming less and less safe as his forces were diminishing, by a most skilful manœuvre withdrew his line of investment some leagues to the rear. According to his calculation, the army had lost 8000 men since he had quitted Almeida.[2] He established his head-quarters with Regnier's corps at Santarem, between the Tagus and the Rio Mayor, a position in the midst of marshes, accessible only by a narrow road, and which, even by the admission of his adversaries, was the strongest in Portugal. Junot occupied Olcanhede and Torres Novas, while Ney's corps extended from Thomar to Punhete; he encamped his cavalry at Leyria, at the back of the Estrella, in order to hold the road to Coimbra. In these new positions the army found itself within reach of other means of subsistence, and capable of advantageously resisting every attack by the enemy. It could hardly be affirmed that Masséna was blockading the English lines, as Wellington had his communications free with the Alentejo, and obtained his provisions by sea; but he pursued an offensive and menacing attitude towards the English, which would permit him to attack them the instant that Napoleon should supply him with the means. General Eblé, by his order, occupied himself actively in constructing bridges across the Zezere, and in making preparations of a more extensive and difficult description, which were required for the construction of a bridge over the Tagus, opposite Punhete. The bridge, for which Eblé had to provide the materials by dint of patience, tenacity, and intelligent industry, was indispensable, not only for subsequent co-operation with Mortier's corps

[1] Despatches: Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Dec. 21, 1810.
[2] Masséna to Berthier, Oct. 29, 1810.

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coming from Andalusia, but also in the event of the arrival of the reinforcements coming from the North. In fact, an attack upon the lines of Torres Vedras could have no chance of success, unless made simultaneously from both banks of the Tagus. Although the lines on the left bank were wellnigh invulnerable, on account of the extraordinary width of the Tagus at its mouth—whence that part has been named La mer de Paille, it was possible, notwithstanding, to throw shells into the lower parts of Lisbon, at the point where the river joins the sea at Almada, and perhaps even to force the fleet to retire. This danger, though at first overlooked by Admiral Berkeley, at a later date made Wellington determine to fortify Almada.

Our communications continued to be interrupted; and we knew nothing of what was passing in France or the rest of the Peninsula. To carry a letter from one part of Spain to another, five hundred men at least were required, and often two thousand. According to King Joseph himself, out of eighty prisoners sent from Andalusia, only forty arrived at Madrid, and ten at the outside reached Bayonne.[1] Often not a single one reached his destination, and on such occasions it was found that the generals themselves had made a traffic of liberating them.[2] Masséna, therefore, had good reason to suppose that the pressing despatches in which he had besought Napoleon to send him succour, could never have reached Berthier. Early in November therefore he sent off General Foy, an educated, able and eloquent officer, to Paris, under protection of a strong escort, instructing him to give the Emperor all the information likely to enlighten him upon the situation of the army.

General Foy arrived in Paris on the 22nd of November. Speedily admitted to an audience by the Emperor, he found him full of prejudice against Masséna, and of delusions as to the possibility of terminating the war, although discontented

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, August 31, 1810.

[2] This fact is stated by Joseph, and by Napoleon himself, Sept. 17, to Berthier.

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with all his generals, with the sole exception of Suchet. Foy had no difficulty in justifying his chief and proving that all his operations had been dictated by circumstances and the force of things; adding, moreover, to this justification a frank and complete statement of the wants and sufferings of the army, of the insufficiency of Masséna's forces in presence of the formidable defences of Torres Vedras; and lastly, the necessity of sending him very large reinforcements, if it was desired that he should achieve success.

Such a statement, made by an eye-witness who had shared all the sufferings and trials of the army in Portugal, and an officer highly esteemed both for character and intellect, ought from its very nature to have dissipated every illusion and ended every misunderstanding. It was Napoleon's last chance of repairing the faults he had committed in Spain. Drouet's two divisions were no longer sufficient; a reinforcement of at least 100,000 men was necessary; nay more, Napoleon should have gone in person and thus put an end at once to the rivalries amongst his generals, and give one single impetus to all the operations. Meanwhile it was essential to be at peace with Europe, in other words to abandon a policy of invasion, provocation and adventure. This, however, was too much to expect from the Emperor, already engaged in a dozen fresh enterprises, and impelled by the fatal tendency of his passions.

While announcing General Foy's arrival in the *Moniteur*, he continued to deceive the nation as to the position of the army in Portugal; and, moreover, insulted it in the midst of its distress, by publishing that 'it *had a large, abundant supply* of bread, meat, rice, wine, rum, sugar, and coffee!' According to his account the army had had nothing but success.[1] Such apparently was the sole effect of so great and severe a lesson, and this last delay accorded to him by fortune he allowed to pass by without understanding how to profit by it. He had just achieved the fatal annexation of the Hanseatic

[1] *Moniteur* of Nov. 23 and 29, 1810.

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Towns, of the Valais, and of the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, and was organising a great army wherewith to invade Russia; contemplating, as the most simple matter possible, a fresh war which would force him to extend his lines of operation from Cadiz to Moscow! He sent back General Foy with the amplest assurances of assistance, but without taking any steps for saving his army in Portugal. It almost seemed as if he henceforward considered the affairs of Spain as quite a secondary matter, which he was certain of settling the moment he should have completed the conquest of Europe.

Till that moment the war apparently might, without any inconvenience, be allowed to drag its slow length along, and our generals be abandoned to their own resources. The orders which he forwarded to Drouet and to Soult show how thoroughly he understood the importance of Masséna's operations and the gravity of his situation; nevertheless, they entirely lacked the precision that was necessary to have made them of any use. He told them both that *everything depended upon the Tagus*, that the first essential point was to assist Masséna, and to drive the English out of the Peninsula; but to these injunctions he added instructions which necessarily paralysed their effect. For instance, while ordering Drouet to hasten to the support of Masséna, he at the same time desired him 'not to let himself be cut off from Almeida.'[1] To Soult he expressed displeasure at the detention of Mortier's corps at Seville, while Romana was allowed to escape and to join Wellington; he told him 'that the siege of Cadiz could not be resisted by the wretched troops who were shut up in that town,' and that his great aim should be to send a *corps d'armée* to the Tagus, between Montalvão and Villaflor, where Masséna was expecting it. But he fixed the strength of this *corps d'armée* at *ten thousand men*, a number so very inadequate that it never could have reached its destination.[2]

Marshal Soult was only too glad to find some pretext for dis-

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, Nov. 20 and 22, 1810.
[2] Berthier to Soult, Dec. 4, 1810.

obedience, and felt no anxiety to help Masséna, or increase the glory of a rival. Indeed, he had enough to do to defend himself against the incessant incursions of the defenders of Cadiz upon the flanks of the besieging army, made by landing a few detachments at a short distance from the place; as well as against sorties from Gibraltar, the guerillas of Ronda, and the frequent attacks by the army of Murcia. He therefore made use of the difficulty of sending the demanded succour as a reason for sending none whatever. Moreover, he had his own private opinion as to the amount of co-operation which he was bound to give to Masséna. And, when at length he saw the impossibility of any longer resisting the urgent solicitations that poured in to him from every quarter, and finally decided on aiding his illustrious colleague, instead of giving the slightest effective support to the army in Portugal, he, as Masséna wittily remarked,[1] only used it as an advanced post from which to undertake the sieges of Olivença and Badajoz, under the pretext of not being able to leave such important strongholds in the rear of his army.

Good will was not the point in which General Drouet failed, but he erred through excessive scrupulosity, as much as Soult had erred by its absence. Towards the end of December he led the succours into Portugal, which had been so long announced and so ardently looked for. But he brought with him neither provisions nor money, and the much vaunted reinforcement had dwindled into some 8000 men lacking every requisite, and composed of the remnants of the Conroux division, with the detachment which Masséna had left at Almeida under command of General Gardanne. Drouet had been forced to start without waiting for his second division, which was still in the north. Pre-occupied with the desire of reconciling contradictory instructions which, on the one hand, ordered him to assist Masséna, and on the other, to keep his communications with Almeida open—two operations which were easy to carry out on paper in Paris, but were impracticable in

[1] Masséna to Berthier, March 20, 1811.

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Portugal—Drouet would have been of but trifling utility, even if the reinforcements he brought had been more considerable.

The winter passed in this manner, amidst terrible privations bravely borne. General Eblé, by an activity little short of miraculous, had finished his preparations for the two bridges to be thrown across the Tagus; but it was impossible to use them until Mortier's corps should show itself upon the left bank. Reduced to its own effective strength, Masséna's army was utterly incapable of operating upon both banks at one and the same time; for to divide itself in presence of an enemy which, thanks to the defences of Torres Vedras, could move in a solid body from one bank to the other, would be to expose itself to inevitable ruin. Moreover, the passage of the Tagus, always hazardous on account of the frequent sudden rise of its waters and its extreme width, was every day becoming more and more difficult. Wellington's attention had for a long time past been fixed upon the dockyards of Punhete, and he had constructed small forts and erected batteries at certain distances on the left bank, besides making his cavalry and militia perpetually scour that side along its entire length. In the end, he there maintained a *corps d'armée* under Beresford, ready to march upon any troops that might come from Andalusia.

General Foy's return in the beginning of February 1811 restored a ray of confidence and hope to the army, although it was soon to be followed by a fresh deception. Full of the Emperor's promises and of his own delusions, the General announced the imminent approach of Soult as a certainty, at the head of an army of succour. As if to confirm the truth of his words, sounds of artillery, dulled by distance but yet distinct, were to be heard, from the 10th to the 15th of February, in the direction of Badajoz. A few days afterwards, however, the wind changed, when nothing more was heard, and those distant and evanescent sounds were all the co-operation which the army of Portugal was to obtain from Soult.

Forced at length by formal orders to march to Masséna's assistance, Soult had advanced to the Guadiana towards the

middle of January, with some 20,000 men, and had taken Olivença, after a few days resistance. He was now making the formal siege of Badajoz, while Masséna's soldiers were dying of hunger and counting the hours for his arrival. Indeed he seemed inclined to expect that statues would be erected to him for his behaviour. He answered Berthier's reproaches in the tone of a great but much calumniated spirit, alleging in his justification that if he had sent 19,000 men to Portugal, as the Emperor had desired, the reinforcement would never have reached its destination; which was certainly true, but in nowise excused him for not having sent 20,000. He promised to take Cadiz immediately, if the Emperor would only allow him to blockade it by one of his squadrons; a very practicable project certainly, provided Admiral Collingwood, who had burnt five of our ships of war at no great distance, had been inclined to let us do so. Lastly, he 'implored the Emperor to send some trustworthy officer to examine into his conduct and even to take his place. As for him, he could not possibly do more, and a glorious death was all he now desired.'[1]

Better than dying would it have been to have attempted, even with but slight chance of success, one of those bold energetic strokes, which have often raised the fame of our great generals to so glorious a height. But for some years past all had become lowered in tone, in audacity, in ambition, nay, in genius; and as Wellington remarked when Ney was conducting the siege operations at Ciudad Rodrigo, before Masséna's arrival, 'this is not the way in which the French have conquered Europe.'[2] The whole month of February passed without anything appearing on the left bank of the Tagus, or the slightest symptom of encouragement being received from Soult. The sufferings of the army meanwhile were becoming intolerable. The country we had occupied for nearly six months, was so wasted and devastated for fifteen leagues around, that the English army, after our departure, found houses there filled

[1] Soult to Berthier, Jan. 22 and 25, 1811.
[2] To Henry Wellesley, June 11, 1810.

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with dead, and numbers dying from pure inanition.[1] It at last became necessary to think of leaving the spot, the witness of so much labour, perseverance, and useless sacrifice; but even then Masséna's indomitable spirit, untouched by that discouragement which had weakened the proudest and most courageous of his comrades, could not bend to the idea of retreat. To seek another encampment where his army might find means of subsistence, until it should be again capable of resuming the offensive, was the only concession he would consent to make to the unfortunate circumstances of the moment.

A new station might be taken up by the army either in the Alentejo, by passing altogether to the left bank of the Tagus, with its line of retreat upon Andalusia, or behind the Mondego, fifteen leagues in rear of its actual position. To pass into the Alentejo was not only to abandon every offensive operation against the English, for no bridge could be held on the Tagus, but it would also give over the whole of Old Castile to their incursions.[2] On the Mondego, on the contrary, the French would continue to hold them in check, while preserving their base of operation at Ciudad Rodrigo, and thus cover the centre of the Peninsula. Masséna chose the latter course. Deceiving the enemy by simultaneous demonstrations on the front of his line, from Punhete to Leyria, and thus keeping Wellington in a state of doubt as to whether he would cross the Tagus at Punhete or return by Leyria upon Coimbra, he, with wonderful skill, took advantage of his adversary's uncertainty to remove his sick, his baggage, and the great bulk of his army, by the routes which lead from Thomar, on the one side, to Pombal, and on the other to Espinhal. On the 8th of March almost the whole army, after three days march, had vanished beyond the Estrella. On the 11th, it advanced upon Coimbra, where Ney, who occupied Pombal with a strong rear-guard, had an engagement, for the first time, with the English troops who were in pursuit.

Montbrun had advanced upon the Mondego with his cavalry,

[1] Napier. [2] Masséna's report to Berthier, March 6, 1811.

but could not, as he had flattered himself, capture Coïmbra, where he found the bridge broken and the approaches to it occupied in force by Colonel Trant's militia. But Coïmbra was indispensable for the occupation of the line of the Mondego, and must therefore be taken at any cost before we became hard pressed by the English army. Everything, consequently, depended on the resistance which our rear-guard could make to the enemy. The combat of Redinha, where Ney with admirable steadiness sustained the shock of the English who poured down upon him from every side, raised hopes that he would gain the time necessary for the construction of the bridge of boats, without which the capture of Coïmbra was impossible. But, whether from some temporary fit of despondency, or some secret spite against Masséna, to whose authority he submitted with the utmost impatience, Marshal Ney, subsequently so grand in a far more difficult retreat, showed neither the same coolness nor the same obstinacy at Condeixa. Disturbed at seeing himself menaced upon his left by an advanced detachment, he fell back, after a short resistance, in the direction of Miranda de Corvo, and abandoned the defiles of Condeixa to the enemy. This act alone rendered all encampment upon the Mondego impossible, for the passage of the river could not be undertaken with the certainty of being attacked during the operation.[1] Masséna therefore had no resource but to ascend it by Puente de Murcelha, in the direction of Ciudad Rodrigo, following a route parallel to the one by which he had entered Portugal. The English made another attempt at Foz d'Aronce to drive in our rear-guard, after which they ceased to trouble our retreat by combats which, though sanguinary, were utterly fruitless.

Masséna returned to the frontier of Spain, deeply grieved and sore at heart, not only at having been sacrificed and made to play such a part at the end of so glorious and long a career, but also for the shameful manner in which he had been abandoned after the many fine promises made to him. In this perilous retreat he had not lost one gun, one baggage-

[1] Masséna to Berthier, March 19, 1811.

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waggon, nor one invalid,[1] a result entirely due to his own unassisted energy; for, from the moment of his arrival at Pombal, Ney had loudly asserted that all the ammunition and military waggons ought to be destroyed in order to facilitate the march of the troops.[2] His army, reduced to 40,000 men, quite as much by privations as by fighting, had neither provisions, ammunition, nor shoes, nor any horses in a state capable of enduring long fatigue, while the uniforms of his soldiers were in shreds. Moreover, so accustomed were they to constant success, that the discipline which they had preserved amidst victory disappeared under their reverses.

But greater difficulties than any he had yet endured awaited Masséna. Arrived at Celorico on the 10th of March, 1811, this intrepid commander, who would not yet admit that he was vanquished, and moved away from Portugal with deep regret, conceived the project of turning back towards the Tagus by Plasencia and Coria, a position in which he could at least maintain the defensive, and manœuvre upon the flanks of the English in the event of their advancing into Old Castile. Consequently he collected information as to the possibility of maintaining himself there. But the project was no sooner known by Marshal Ney, than he gave the finishing stroke to his bad conduct towards his chief since the opening of the campaign, by writing Masséna an outrageous letter, informing him that he peremptorily refused to execute such a movement, unless commanded to do so by an express order from the Emperor. A formal statement of the drawbacks attendant upon such an operation on Plasencia accompanied this declaration—a step unprecedented on the part of a subordinate.[3] Masséna's only answer consisted in repeating his order to prepare for the execution of the movement. Ney, on his side, insisted on the Emperor's orders being communicated to him, declaring anew his firm intention of not obeying unless they were shown to him: 'I know,' he said, at the end of his second letter, 'that in thus

[1] Masséna to Berthier, March 19, 1811. [2] Ib. March 31, 1811.
[3] Ney to Masséna, March 22, 2 o'clock, p.m.

formally opposing myself to your intentions I am incurring great responsibility, but even if I am to be dismissed or to lose my head, I will not follow the move on Plasencia and Coria of which your Excellency speaks to me, unless, I repeat, it is ordered by the Emperor.'[1]

Whatever might be the character of its author, such a letter could never have been written in any army except one where the sentiment of duty and respect for discipline had deteriorated to a dreadful degree. Amongst troops who preserve the spirit of abnegation, which is the very soul of military honour, public spirit reacts upon individuals, and is alone sufficient to prevent such errors. The fact was, therefore, in itself an alarming revelation of the moral state of the army, showing that it had sunk to a degree of lassitude and discouragement which forbade any hope of its making the great efforts necessary in an active campaign: 'It is sufficient,' wrote Masséna, 'for the enemy to show the heads of a few columns in order to intimidate the officers and make them loudly declare that the whole of Wellington's army is in sight.' Ultimately, the information which arrived from Estremadura proved that there would be the utmost difficulty in obtaining means of subsistence there, and Regnier had also compromised the plan by allowing himself to be surprised at Sabugal. Masséna was consequently obliged, much against his will, to be satisfied with leading his troops towards Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca, after depriving Ney of his command, and placing the sixth corps under the orders of General Loison.

Early in April Masséna had a foretaste of the disgrace which awaited him as a reward for his long trials: 'Succeed,' Napoleon often said; 'I judge men only by results!'[2] Masséna had failed to observe this great precept. A letter from Berthier, dated March 29, 1811, conveyed to him the Emperor's censure, but thinly veiled, on the subject of the operations of the army in Portugal. After having so imperiously ordered him to march straight ahead against the English, whose

[1] Ney to Masséna, March 22, 4 o'clock p.m.

[2] *Mémoires de Molitor.*

weakness and small numbers were so confidently guaranteed to him, he was now reproached with 'having shown too much audacity in attacking the position at Busaco,' and for having, after Busaco, advanced up to the lines of Torres Vedras—of which no one knew the existence! The Emperor, said Berthier, would have stopped at Coïmbra, would then have fortified himself, have made magazines, have raised the spirits of the troops, &c.—advice always very easy to give after the event; but unmerited and almost indecent sarcasm when inflicted upon so illustrious a soldier, whose misfortune had been caused by Napoleon's own carelessness and want of foresight. To estimate the worth of such reproaches, it is sufficient to recall the impatience displayed by Napoleon at the outset of the campaign, and thus appreciate what his impressions would have been if the Marshal had declined the combat.

Meanwhile Masséna's fortunate rival, compensated at last for the jealousies, fears, distrusts, sinister predictions and passionate criticisms, of which his great undertaking had been the object, was overpowered with marks of gratitude and admiration by England. The Houses of Lords and Commons passed the most flattering votes of thanks to him,[1] and all parties joined in one universal outburst of national feeling. The Ministry, which a few days before Masséna's retreat had written to him through Lord Liverpool, reproaching him with the scale of his expenses, and signifying that he must diminish them,[2] now showed him nothing but the most respectful deference. He alone had foreseen everything, he alone had been wise, he alone had understood the sort of tactics to be employed against Napoleon; in fact, to him alone did the world owe the only great check which, up to that period, had ever been inflicted on the Imperial power upon the Continent; and from that moment forward Wellington obtained an ascendancy that became more and more marked in the direction, not only of military, but also of all political affairs.

[1] Resolutions, April 26, 1811.

[2] Lord Liverpool to Wellington, Feb. 20, 1811.

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Far from reposing on his great success, he instantly prepared to follow it up by striking further blows at his enemy. Owing to the reinforcements which his government no longer refused him, as well as to the dispersion of Masséna's army, which was dying of hunger at Salamanca as it had done in Portugal, Wellington found himself strong enough to venture on dividing his troops into two corps d'armée, operating simultaneously in Estremadura and Old Castile. He at once resolved to retake the places captured by us in both provinces—namely, Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo in the one, and Badajoz in the other, which latter had surrendered to Soult on the 12th of March. Assuming however, with the truest sagacity, that the provisions at Almeida must have been much diminished by Masséna's unfortunate army, he contented himself with merely investing that town, while he sent Beresford forward to besiege Badajoz.

The French army of Portugal had scarcely recovered from its fatigues, and far less from the moral shock it had sustained, when it became necessary to provide against this fresh danger. It had however received reinforcements, horses, and a portion of the accoutrements of which it stood in such extreme need. Almeida could not hold out more than a few days longer, and Wellington having relaxed in prudence and diminished his strength by nearly one half, Masséna considered the opportunity propitious for relieving the place and taking summary revenge upon the English. He therefore marched, on the 2nd of May, 1811, from Ciudad Rodrigo upon Almeida, with about 38,000 men, who were joined by a battery of artillery and some 1,500 cavalry belonging to the Guards, commanded by Marshal Bessières. On the 3rd of May he took up a position right opposite the English army. According to its custom, the latter was entrenched upon ground peculiarly favourable for defence, between two small rivers, the Dos Casas and the Turones. From thence it covered all the investment works, and extended from the forts of La Concepcion and of Alameda to Fuentes d'Oñoro, its front protected by the deep ravine of the Dos Casas, and its retreat secured by two bridges over the

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Turones and the Coa. For the first time since Busaco it was inferior to us in numbers, not counting more than 36,000 men, including its Spanish auxiliaries; but the strength of its position amply compensated for this disadvantage.

Wellington's left and centre being very difficult of access, from the depth of the Dos Casas ravine, Masséna resolved to attack him upon his right at Fuentes d'Oñoro, to seize, if possible, the bridge across the Coa which secured his retreat to Castelbone, and then to drive back the whole of his army into the corner from which there was no exit, formed by the Douro, the Coa, and the Agueda. In the afternoon of the 3rd of May the Ferey division attacked the village of Fuentes d'Oñoro impetuously, carried the lower part and established themselves in it without much difficulty; but on endeavouring to get possession of the upper portion, which was strongly occupied and covered by the Dos Casas, they were received by a terrific fire and driven back beyond the river. Before long they returned to the attack, supported this time by the Marchand division and a number of guns that played on the village, while Reguier appeared in force at Alameda in the hope of diverting the attention of the English to their left. But this second attack was not more successful than the first, and our troops, after showing themselves for a moment on the heights of Fuentes d'Oñoro, were driven down again at the point of the bayonet, forced to retreat across the stream, and to leave the streets of the village heaped up with their dead and dying.

Night suspended the combat. It had meanwhile become clear that the heights of Fuentes d'Oñoro—the key of the English positions—could not be carried except by a fearful struggle. But perhaps they could be turned. Next day, therefore, the 4th of May, Masséna made a general reconnaissance of the enemy's line, with a view to discover his vulnerable point. Beyond Fuentes de Oñoro, towards Poso-Velho and Nave de Aver, the ground was flat and the Dos Casas dwindled to a mere streak of water; the ravine, so great an obstacle, disappeared, and our cavalry, far superior to the enemy's, could manœuvre and operate with effect. From that point Welling-

ton's right could be turned, his communications with Sabugal interrupted, and his line of retreat on Castelbone menaced. Consequently, by a change of fronts, operated during the night of the 4th, Masséna moved the cavalry commanded by Montbrun, Loison's two divisions, and a portion of Drouet's and of Junot's corps to Poso-Velho; whilst Regnier remained opposite Alameda in order to occupy the enemy by feigned attacks.

At early dawn on the 5th our united forces attacked Poso-Velho, which position was at first defended only by the Spanish auxiliaries under Don Julian Sanchez. Wellington, however, foreseeing Masséna's manœuvre, had sent them a reinforcement during the night, composed of a Portuguese corps, the Houston brigade, and General Cotton's cavalry; but the Marchand and Mermet divisions, with the Maucune brigade, attacking them with impetuosity while Montbrun's cavalry charged furiously on their flanks, they broke beneath the shock, and were driven back across the Turone.

Behind these regiments, however, the Crawford division stood drawn up in battle array, and at once sheltered and rallied them. But Montbrun broke through and penetrated into two squares of English infantry, and his cavalry were in the midst of a splendid headlong onset, when masked batteries suddenly opened and stopped them short in full career, causing them most fearful loss. At this critical moment, one portion of the cavalry which belonged to our Guards refused to charge, on the pretext that it had not received the order to do so from Bessières, its own special commander. Meanwhile the English army had lost the whole table-land of Poso-Velho, or in other words, nearly a league of ground on its right. But Wellington had reinforced Crawford by one division, besides the Ashworth brigade and a reserve of artillery; while, concentrating all the troops we had repulsed in the morning upon the same spot, and openly abandoning all intention of preserving his communications with Sabugal, he opposed a new front to us, resting at one end upon Fuentes d'Oñoro, and at the other upon the Turone and the Coa. This new line resisted our most furious

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onslaughts with unshaken steadiness, and Fuentes d'Oñoro again became the central point of the action. It was taken and retaken several times by both armies with extraordinary fierceness, but this sanguinary day ended without our having gained any greater advantage than on the previous one. We remained masters, it is true, of the lower part of the village, and of the plain on which the morning's battle had been fought, but this was a poor compensation for the fact that the English still continued to invest Almeida, and that consequently we had missed our aim.

Masséna wished at all hazards to recommence the battle on the morrow; but his ammunition was exhausted, and what was more unfortunate, his principal officers were all opposed to a renewal of the attack. Ammunition might have been obtained from Ciudad Rodrigo, but neither Bessières, Drouet, nor Regnier would begin the struggle again; and meanwhile the enemy was employing every hour in fortifying himself and covering his position by abattis and entrenchments. During four whole days Masséna—unwilling to admit that he had been beaten—continued opposite the English army, front to front, or turning round its positions, as if to find out some point where he could attack it anew. At length, on the 10th of May, he moved away, broken-hearted. Before leaving he despatched an order to Brenier, the commandant at Almeida, to evacuate the place and blow up the fortifications, long since undermined. Brenier and his small garrison left the place in the night of the 10th of May, leaving a few men behind to set fire to the mines; then, creeping on under cover of the darkness and silence of the camp, which was sunk in sleep, he passed through the English lines with the utmost intrepidity and success, and joined the French army in the course of the following day.[1] Masséna soon afterwards returned to France: unpopular with the army, who attributed

[1] Report by Masséna to Berthier, May 7, 1811. Wellington to Liverpool, May 8, 1811. Napier, Peninsular War. General Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*.

its sufferings to him; in disgrace with Napoleon, who never forgave him his failure, of which he himself was the sole cause; cried down by his companions in arms, envious of his superiority; carrying a tarnished fame into the solitude which was henceforth to be his lot, with the stinging remembrance of his unrequited services, and all the disappointment and bitterness of a heart irrecoverably wounded. His successor had been already appointed, in the person of the thoughtless and presumptuous Marmont.

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A few days later it became known that Soult had on his side made an attempt to force Beresford to raise the siege of Badajoz, and had been even less successful than Masséna. Beresford had waited for him at Albuera, in positions that had been pointed out to him by Wellington[1] a month previously, as those which he should choose for defensive battle with the enemy. Soult, casting on this occasion all his customary pretences aside, entered into the engagement seriously and with extraordinary energy; and his defeat, in consequence, was all the more sanguinary. Far from having added to his renown, his calculation, double dealing, and artful diplomacy had only contributed to his trouble. His losses before Badajoz, with those of his lieutenant Victor at Cadiz, and above all at Chiciana, had so weakened the army of Andalusia, that he had now to ask every one for assistance—Berthier, Joseph, and even Masséna, whom he had so treacherously abandoned.

Beresford's military arrangements at Albuera resembled those of Wellington as much as it was possible for the work of a pupil to resemble that of his master. The battle, which he accepted rather than offered, was a thoroughly defensive one, carried on with a caution that almost amounted to timidity. The brilliant tacticians of the Empire had no words wherewith to express their contempt for the stationary, hesitating, embarrassed system which the Anglo-Spanish army was compelled to adopt from the mixed character of its troops. Even Masséna, who was far more clear-sighted than others, could not

[1] In a letter to Beresford, April 16, 1811.

avoid remarking, in his bulletin from Fuentes d'Oñoro, with a certain amount of secret spite, that his adversary 'had employed all the resources of fortification against an attack made by main force.' And the *Moniteur*, in articles which display Napoleon's own hand, delighted in sneering at Wellington's 'prudence.'

Sneers of this kind were as senseless as those of the Austrian generals in 1796, when they reproached the youthful Bonaparte with not fighting them according to rule. Wellington's slowness and prudence were as appropriate to the character of the war in Spain as Bonaparte's rapidity and audacity had been to that of the war in Italy. This new system of tactics was not only well suited to the small resources at the disposal of the English general, but was also based on a thorough acquaintance with the weak points in the Imperial method of warfare, and with both the defects and virtues of the French army such as Napoleon had made it. This new army—more impetuous than solid, aiming above all else at show and effect, less solicitous about results than appearances, living only by expediency and rapine, creating an enemy to itself in every loaf of bread it ate, bold during success and insubordinate under reverses—was beginning to despise as so many worn-out prejudices the strong and patient virtues by which it had attained its renown. Rivalry had replaced emulation, ambition supplanted patriotism, and a mania for favours had even introduced court privileges into the army. How else, in an army formed by such a general as Napoleon, can that etiquette, worthy alone of the lower Empire, be explained, by which the Guards were forbidden to charge, no matter how great the peril, without an express order from their own special commanding officer, as though their position near the sovereign had conferred upon them a share in the sacred inviolability of his person?

Inflexible discipline, constant attention in securing subsistence for his soldiers, in paying all his expenses, in preserving his communications, in systematically acting upon the defensive, so as never to accept battle until he had collected all the advantages on his side—excessive circumspection in the formation of

his plans, and indomitable obstinacy during action,—such were the means by which Wellington opposed us. They were no doubt far less brilliant than ours from an æsthetic point of view; not theatrically striking; offering no scientific combinations that could be quoted in a treatise upon strategy; but eminently efficacious. Wellington dazzled no one, but he beat us. He could afford to bear our contempt with philosophy, when he was successively defeating Junot, Soult, Ney, and Masséna; in other words, the generals who had contributed most to the success of the Empire.

CHAPTER V.

ALEXANDER AND POLAND. PREPARATIONS FOR THE WAR IN RUSSIA. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN POWERS. (*December* 1810—*September* 1811.)

The recent serious events in the Peninsula did not at first create that sensation in Europe which they seemed calculated to produce. The real facts were but little known, owing to the compulsory silence of the press; they came to light only by degrees, and Napoleon was consequently enabled to use greater intimidation than ever. England alone seems to have thoroughly understood the importance of the long and terrible duel which had been fought out in Portugal. It soon, however, became evident that the lesson had not been lost on another power, the only one throughout the whole extent of the subdued continent that now dared to stand up against Napoleon. Russia, long the most accommodating amongst his allies, but now wearied by his tyrannical exactions, rose up against him as a last champion of the rights of Europe. Her attitude was the more disquieting from the fact that she avoided with the utmost care all provocation or bravado, though firmly determined at the same time to maintain her rights. 'All eyes are fixed upon the two Empires,' wrote Joseph de Maistre from St. Petersburg so early as the month of February, 1811.[1] The antagonism between the two Emperors was no longer

[1] *Correspondance Diplomatique*, published by Albert Blanc.

anywhere a secret. Their quarrels, long hidden in the discreet recesses of diplomatic offices, became public to the world when Napoleon, without the shadow of a pretext, seized the states of the Duke of Oldenburg, totally regardless of his family relationship to Alexander. That mad act, however, notwithstanding all that has been said on the subject, was not the determining cause of Alexander's coolness. Apart from his previous grievances, the usurpations which had accompanied or preceded the annexation of Oldenburg were more than enough to justify a rupture. But in this last violation of the law of nations there was a sort of personal affront well calculated to give greater weight to Alexander's complaints, not so much from a legal point of view as from that of public opinion, always of eminent importance in a matter of the kind.

Henceforward we behold him venturing to assume an energetic and decided attitude. His first answer to the annexation of Oldenburg was an ukase, issued under date of December 31, 1810, in which he distinctly detached himself from Napoleon's commercial system, restored the freedom of his tariffs, and, without admitting English merchandise more freely than before, excluded certain of our manufactures, just as we had already excluded certain products of Russia. That he had a strict right to act in this manner admits of no doubt, nor can it be asserted that he was in any way bound by those arbitrary and changeable decrees which constituted the continental system—decrees, moreover, that had been issued without his consent, were impracticable in Russia, and obeyed by Napoleon himself only when it suited his own convenience. The testimony of their author himself might be quoted on this point, for, while making it criminal on Alexander's part to infringe the decrees by his ukase, Napoleon admitted in formal terms that after all 'he had been at liberty to adopt this measure, but for something (a *je ne sais quoi*) which it implied hostile to France and favourable to England.'[1] But what availed it to possess strict right, when such right was in opposition to his imperious will? And no matter how trifling that something, that '*je ne*

[1] Napoleon to the King of Wurtemberg, April 1, 1811.

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sais quoi,' might be, of which Napoleon spoke, was it not sufficient ground in his eyes for a war, even for a war with Russia?

Alexander, taking his formidable antagonist's character into account, henceforward with the utmost foresight considered such a war inevitable, and at once made every effort to prepare for it. Nor did he any longer give himself the needless and humiliating trouble of concealing his armaments. But while ordering new levies, and recalling troops from Finland, and from the Danubian Provinces, to the frontiers of Poland, and constructing defensive works on the Dnieper and the Dwina, he endeavoured to impart to them the appearance of being altogether of a defensive character. Although his right to declare war had become indisputable ever since Napoleon's latest outrages against the public law of Europe, the Emperor Alexander could not view so extreme a measure, at all times full of peril, without the keenest and most painful perplexity. Was he to maintain this expectant attitude to the last, and wait until his enemy should come to seek him on Russian territory, thus making his wrongs more palpable? or would it not be better to advance upon him before he had finished his preparations, and defeat his plans by one of those sudden attacks which are often the best method of defence?

The temptation to Alexander must have been strong, for it is undeniable that though he had begun his armaments after ours, he was ready before Napoleon. The rumour of the imminent opening of a campaign by the Russians was circulated in Poland and St. Petersburg during the whole winter of 1811. One of our diplomatists, Bignon, then on the mission at Warsaw, being apprised of this by Prince Poniatowski, mentioned it in one of his despatches, and Alexander himself made an indirect allusion to the report, when in the following month of May he exclaimed, during a conversation with our ambassador, 'If I had wished to make an attack, who could have prevented me? *I have been ready for the last two months!*'[1] Did the intention attributed to

[1] Lauriston's despatch, June 1, 1811.

him, and so natural in his position, exist really as a deliberate project, or was it merely an empty and passing desire? For a very long time past it has not been possible to arrive at anything more than conjecture on the point, but we are now enabled to clear up the question.

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Alexander had never altogether given up his old dream of reconciling Poland with Russia. At this period, as at the beginning of his reign, he would willingly have held out his hand to the Poles, provided their emancipation were effected to the advantage of Russia without sundering the bonds which united them to that empire; but nothing would induce him to permit it to be achieved by any foreign influence. Having been compelled, by the popularity which Napoleon had acquired in Poland through his creation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, to postpone his youthful Utopia indefinitely, he was forcibly compelled to take it up again, from the moment that the Grand Duchy had been strengthened and increased by the accession of a portion of Galicia, and above all when he beheld the threatening contingency of a new war rising before him. In so unequal a struggle he wished to have Poland as his ally at any price, and was ready to make every sacrifice in order to detach it from Napoleon.

That the liberation of Poland was a terrible weapon against Russia, and that Napoleon was resolved to make use of that weapon at some future day, Alexander could not for an instant doubt, after his fruitless efforts to obtain some promise from the Emperor binding himself never to restore that kingdom. There was but one method by which Alexander could deprive Napoleon of the extraordinary power he had acquired over the Poles—namely, by himself making advances to them imploring them to forget all rancour and past mistrust, and offering them more than Napoleon could give them. Alexander in no wise shrunk from the natural consequences of his great resolve. From the time that Napoleon had rejected his draft of a convention relative to Poland, the Czar had resumed his *pourparlers* of former days with Prince Adam Czartoryski, the friend and confidant of his youth. He

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clearly pointed out to him the probability of some possible arrangement with Poland, and the advantages which that unfortunate country might derive from it; but the Prince did not conceal from the Czar the difficulties attending such a project, the attachment of his fellow-countrymen to France, the hopes they rested upon her, and the obstacles which Napoleon would not fail to arouse against him.

On the 25th of December, 1810, under the evident impression of the news just arrived from France, Alexander's proposals suddenly emerged from their vague state, and acquired all the form and precision desirable. 'It seems to me,' he wrote to Czartoryski, 'that this is the moment to prove to the Poles that Russia is not their enemy, but, rather their natural and true friend; that, although they have been made to look upon Russia as the only existing opponent to the restoration of Poland, it is not improbable, on the contrary, that she will be the one to realise it. My saying this may perhaps astonish you, but, I repeat it, circumstances appear to me favourable for my carrying out an idea which formerly was my favourite one, and which I have twice been obliged to postpone from the force of circumstances, but which has none the less remained in the recesses of my mind.'[1] And he instantly asks the Prince a series of questions of which the two following are a summary. 'Have you grounds for believing that the inhabitants of Warsaw would grasp with avidity at any certainty (not probability, but *certainty*) of their regeneration? Would they seize it, no matter whence it came to them, and would they join the power which would sincerely espouse their interests?' The answer of such a patriot as Czartoryski could not be uncertain. 'Yes!' he wrote to the Emperor; 'the certainty of Poland's regeneration would be accepted with eagerness and gratitude, no matter whence it came, *provided that such certainty had a real existence.*'

But, as he said, therein lay the whole difficulty. No matter how Napoleon might have wronged the Poles, he had contrived

[1] Alexander to Prince Czartoryski, December 25, 1810.

to persuade them that he wished to liberate them, and it was in him alone that they placed their confidence. Moreover, he had 20,000 Poles in Spain, who were so many hostages in his hands. Nevertheless the Prince thought it possible to rally round him the majority of the Polish nation, if three things were promised to him—the constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791; the union of the whole of Poland under one sceptre; and, lastly, the commercial advantages which were indispensable to her. But it would be necessary to act without half measures or reservations, in a grand and noble manner, so as to impress the imagination of the public, and even then success appeared to him difficult. 'It is too good to be true!' he exclaimed sadly at the end of his letter.[1]

This time, however, the Emperor Alexander tore away every veil, and took a decided step. Unity of Poland, liberal constitution, everything in fine, he promised to Czartoryski; but he made it a condition *sine quâ non* that Poland should form a kingdom united to Russia, of which the Emperor should henceforward style himself Emperor and King, and that the leading Poles should make a formal engagement with him to that effect. If these two conditions were accepted he would proclaim the restoration of Poland and instantly attack Napoleon, notwithstanding his repugnance to be the aggressor. This he believed that he could do with great chance of success. He had an army of 106,000 men perfectly ready to enter on a campaign. Another army of 134,000 men would march in support of the first. He calculated on the cooperation of 50,000 more from the Poles, and the same number from Prussia. These forces alone formed a mass of 300,000 men, to which, according to his calculation, Napoleon had then but a very small army to oppose, especially if, as there was reason to expect, Austria were induced to join by the offer of the Danubian Principalities in exchange for the portion of Galicia which still remained to her.[2]

These offers were sincere, as the Emperor Alexander after-

[1] Czartoryski to Alexander, January 30, 1811.

[2] Alexander to Czartoryski, January 31, 1811.

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wards fully proved, by resuming the realisation of his liberal programme at a period when circumstances in nowise obliged him to do it. But Prince Czartoryski, despite his zeal and his patriotism, could not ensure him the guarantees demanded. The projects of founding a kingdom of Poland, and of attacking Napoleon, were in consequence abandoned, and Alexander was forced to revert to his defensive system.[1] In the interests of Russia this return to a prudent policy was in all probability not to be regretted. Had Alexander under the most favourable circumstances obtained even a preliminary success, he could not have followed it up farther. The rapidity with which Napoleon concentrated his armies is well known. The only difference therefore would have been, that, instead of giving battle on the Vistula, he would have accepted it on the Oder, the Elbe, or the Weser; and then this new coalition would have expired in a day, like all those which had preceded it, though with far more disastrous consequences to the European cause. By not turning to account the advantages which his vast territory and rigorous climate afforded her against so formidable an enemy as Napoleon, Russia would voluntarily deprive herself of her best chances of conquering him. But in January, 1811, the Emperor Alexander was not yet convinced of this truism, and it was Masséna's campaign in Portugal which first made him understand it.

The plan which he definitively adopted was partially the work of Count Armfeldt, a Swede by birth, who, after having held high appointments in his own country, had taken refuge in Russia on Bernadotte's elevation to the rank of Crown Prince. Having been received with distinction at St. Petersburg, and appointed Governor of Finland by Alexander, von Armfeldt showed his gratitude by addressing various military and political notes to him, which seem to have had a marked influence on the Emperor's deliberations. His plans were supported and

[1] The project of founding a Grand Duchy of Lithuania, of which Count Oginski speaks in his Memoirs, vol. iii, was devised only on the failure of the one I have just mentioned, and was abandoned for the same reasons.

verified by eminent personages, remarkable in different ways, such as Barclay de Tolly, Serra Capriola, and Admiral Mordwinoff.

To maintain his grievances against Napoleon, without affording him any loophole for attack by too open an opposition; to arouse secret enemies against him in every direction, while avoiding every act that might seem compromising; to resist him by inaction; to force him to attack by always threatening without ever striking him; then, when war was declared, to retire before him, destroying everything on his road, and creating a desert around his army; to entice him on into the depths of Russia, by refusing any general action unless certain to carry it, being content to act on his communications until he should be worn out and exhausted, by the method with which Wellington had succeeded so well—such was the programme, so far as we are allowed to infer from very incomplete information, which Armfeldt and his friends drew up on this occasion. Most probably they did not stand alone in recommending it, for such ideas were then in the air, and some trace of them is to be found everywhere. Diplomatic documents and the works of public writers equally testify to their existence. At all events this was the system adopted by Alexander. The plan was known from July, 1811, and Alquier, our Minister at Stockholm, reported its leading points to Napoleon, but the warning proved as useless as so many others which he received at the same period.

This programme once fixed upon, Alexander, no matter who was its author, had the merit of holding to it with unvarying perseverance, and of setting it in motion with marvellous skill. War between these two powerful empires was henceforth certain, as was equally well known on both sides. Napoleon, though he had desired it, now regarded it with an apprehension to which he had hitherto been a stranger; but as neither party would make the concessions necessary for its prevention, it every day became more inevitable. It must be admitted, however, that notwithstanding the inferiority of his situation, Alexander up to the last maintained the advantage

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over his adversary in frankness, moderation and dignity, as he always had done in strict right; and during the long series of reciprocal recriminations which lasted through the whole of 1811, Alexander's words generally corresponded with his actions.

From the first day that Caulaincourt questioned him as to his armaments he acknowledged them, observing withal to the ambassador, that they were only in answer to those of Napoleon; a fact which was strictly true. At the same time Napoleon obstinately denied his, with a dissimulation as petty as it was useless. The whole of Europe knew and complained of his sending arms, ammunition and soldiers to Hamburg, to Dantzig, and the Duchy of Warsaw; his convoys encumbered the roads and canals, yet he continued to deny them, or when forced to admit them, had explanations ready-made for everything. At one time these troops were intended to watch Prussia, at another to repel a projected landing of the English. He had such a habit of lying, or rather such a predilection for it, always and everywhere, that he persisted in it even when certain that the lie would not be believed. He could hardly flatter himself, after all that had occurred, that he would be able to invade Russia in the noiseless manner in which he had invaded Spain—professing alliance and friendship at the moment that his troops were seizing all the strong places of the kingdom. However, his proceedings towards Alexander seem exactly traced on those he had employed towards Charles IV.

The more actively his preparations were urged forward, the more affectionate his protestations became. 'He wishes to do nothing which may be disagreeable to the Emperor Alexander,' he writes on February the 17th, 1811. 'He has done all that depended on him by offering Erfurt as an indemnity to the Prince of Oldenburg. *The terms of the Senatus-Consultum are precise!*' Napoleon's good-will enchained by the terms of his Senatus-Consultum! Was not this a discovery full of genius? 'You will desire the Duke of Vicenza,' he continued, 'to declare to the Emperor that I persevere in the alliance; that I see no possible circumstance in which I should make war on Russia,

except in the single case of Russia taking part with England; *that I have no alliance with any power.*'[1] Nevertheless, on the very same day and hour, he caused overtures to be made to Turkey,[1] who without delay communicated them to the whole of Europe; and a few days later, on February the 25th, he made them to Austria, whose discretion was only measured by her interest. Count Otto was instructed to tell Metternich that 'France beheld with regret the increase of territory which Russia had acquired by the occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia, but having consented to that occupation through enmity to Austria at the period of the interview at Erfurt, she could no longer oppose it without having recourse to war. Those provinces were only of secondary interest to France, but of primary importance to Austria. How far then would Austria be disposed to go, and what would she be capable of doing in order *to prevent their annexation?* Would her displeasure go so far as to make her entertain the idea of war with Russia?'[2]

Such simplicity is astounding in the midst of so much trickery. It was certainly an exaggeration of candour to imagine that Austria could be frightened by an increase of territory on the part of Russia, when that increase was denounced to her by the man who in the space of a few years had taken possession of the half of Europe, and had just despoiled Austria herself of her finest provinces? Could it be supposed that such overtures would remain a secret? Would it not be silly to believe that a power which had been struck with such merciless rigour could all at once give up its traditions, interests, ill-will and hopes, because the Emperor Francis had been reduced to the humiliation of giving his own daughter to his enemy for the purpose of disarming him; because, according to an expression of Louis XVIII in a letter to the Comte d'Avray, he had made himself 'a merchant of human kind'? A diplomacy that reposed on a foundation of

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, February 17, 1811.
[2] The same, February 25, 1811.

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such pitiable illusions, and ventured on such rash proceedings, was indeed a wretched one; and how could any one in Paris forget that Metternich's most intimate friend at Vienna was Count Razumowski, former Russian Ambassador to the Court of Austria?

Alexander was informed day by day of our diplomatic proceedings, not only by his agents, but, as it was easy to foresee, by the foreign Courts themselves, eminently interested in making him aware of the intrigues of the common enemy. He was no less cognisant of our military preparations and of the movements of our troops, through the medium of his aide-de-camp Czernitcheff, a brilliant diplomatist and soldier, who was a great favourite in the *salons* of Paris. Apparently occupied solely with pleasure and success in society, Czernitcheff had contrived, by secret information, to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the operations of our Ministry of War. After such communications, what effect could the protestations of friendship, which Napoleon persisted in lavishing upon him, produce on Alexander's mind?

Napoleon determined to recall Caulaincourt, whom he accused of having become more Russian than French, under the influence of Alexander's civilities; and sent Lauriston in his place, who soon incurred the same reproach for having shown equal sincerity. On this occasion he wrote to Alexander, saying that 'he had looked around him for the man whom he thought would be most agreeable to His Majesty, and most fit to maintain peace and the alliance; but,' added he in a melancholy tone, 'I cannot deceive myself, *your Majesty no longer entertains any friendship for me!*'[1] A long list then follows of all that he had done for Alexander; how he had allowed him to take Finland and the Danubian Provinces from ancient allies of France; how he might have roused Poland, but had abstained from doing so; in short, if he were to be believed, Russia had appropriated to herself all the advantages of the alliance.

[1] Napoleon to Alexander, February 28, 1811.

He forgot that in the same space of time he had taken possession of Spain, Tuscany, the Roman States, Illyria, the Tyrol, Holland, a portion of Hanover, the Hanseatic Towns, Oldenburg, and the Valais,—acquisitions which doubtless might be balanced against Finland and Moldo-Wallachia! well knowing that, no matter how he might try to hide his armaments, some rumours about them must transpire, he made up his mind to acknowledge them partially in a note to Prince Kourakine, though assuring him at the same time that we were scandalously calumniated, 'that malicious persons took pleasure in exaggerating the smallest circumstances, that the least movement could not be made without its being misrepresented, that an approaching great move on the part of the English in the Baltic had alone induced him to increase the garrison at Dantzig; that, in short, the best way to defeat such malevolence was by henceforward reciprocally informing each other of whatever might be capable of giving rise to wrong interpretations.'[1]

These explanations, remarkable for their fair and cordial frankness, were transmitted from Napoleon to Alexander at the very moment when he was personally arranging the organisation of his *grande armée* to the minutest details, down even to the number of *dark lanterns* which should be carried by every waggon belonging to a park of artillery![2] He sent Davout as many as three despatches in a single day to stimulate his zeal. Notwithstanding, he would not for one moment admit the possibility of Russia's intending to attack him. Above all, he did not wish any one to believe that power could have such excessive audacity. According to him she was much too occupied with the Turks to dream of it. What the Poles wrote upon that subject '*was nothing but nonsense.*'[3] Sure of Davout's discretion, he ordered him to advise Rapp to *hold his tongue*, and to impress on every one that all his preparations were directed against the English.

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, March 19, 1811.
[2] Napoleon to Clarke, March 19, 1811.
[3] Napoleon to Davout, March 24, 1811.

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Whilst thus denying a war which he at once desired and feared, and to which he was dragged on as if by some fascination, he every day took another step towards his fall; sometimes with a secret desire to turn back, but without being able to withdraw himself from the fatal influence of his pride and of his past faults. One is justified in believing that, on the eve of playing this formidable part, he had more than one moment of anxiety, and perhaps, therefore, he did not always act with bad faith when proposing to Alexander a renewal of their former friendship. But there was only one act which could effect their reconciliation, and that was simply the complete restitution of the Duchy of Oldenburg; such a retractation, however, was so repugnant to all his instincts, it was so incompatible with the idea which he wished to give of himself, with the part which he had arrogated to himself in the world, that it constituted nothing short of a real moral impossibility.

Napoleon would have belied all his past career, have abandoned all his pretensions, old and new, and renounced his whole system of domination, had he thus voluntarily acted in direct contradiction to all his previous life. Moreover, he never had been master of his own passions, and was now no longer master of his system. He was the slave of what he called his destiny, or in other words, of that character, consisting of omnipotence and infallibility, which he had usurped at so early a period of his career. If he allowed the slightest blow to be struck at it, the entire framework would collapse. There was some cause, therefore, for his saying that he could not undo what had been done, even though he sometimes might desire it. But this impossibility of retreat signified war, for Alexander was equally determined to maintain his protest, and to be no longer either an assistant or an accomplice of the oppressor of the Continent. Although his system was purely defensive, the result of his passive but inflexible resistance was none the less inevitable. While the one never retreated and the other was always advancing, it was utterly impossible that a collision should not take place within a given time.

These considerations explain how a war, which apparently could have been so easily prevented, was nevertheless prepared, resolved upon, and announced during a long period, slowly and coolly, without the slightest animosity on either side, and even amidst protestations of the most affectionate and pacific description. The question this time was one of the massacre of a million of men, and Napoleon by one word might have averted the calamity. But it was not in the nature of this monster of power and of pride, such as he had been made by the abject submission of nations, to pronounce the one word which was essential for the purpose; and those who had raised the idol could not complain of having to furnish him with victims. Hence, while incessantly repeating 'I do not wish for war,' he beheld war as it were marching forward in full animation before his view, and was not able to resist the attraction which it exercised over him. The vision never again left his mind. '*War will take place*,' he wrote to the King of Würtemburg; '*it will take place in spite of me, in spite of the Emperor Alexander, in spite of the interests both of France and of Russia.* I have seen the same thing very often, and it is my experience of the past which reveals the future to me. It is all like a scene in an opera, of which the English control the machinery!'[1]

A few days afterwards, he allowed the same impression to appear in a letter to the Emperor of Russia, when for the first time acknowledging to him one portion of his preparations. 'I have received information from Bucharest,' he wrote, 'that five Russian divisions have quitted Moldavia and Wallachia for Poland. . . . . I also have been obliged to attend to my affairs and to place myself in readiness. The reaction caused by my preparations will induce your Majesty to increase yours; and that, being reported here, will oblige me to make fresh levies, and *all this for pure phantoms!* . . . . . For myself, I shall continue to be the personal friend of your Majesty, even when the fatality which is dragging Europe onwards shall one day place arms in the hands of both nations.'[2]

[1] Napoleon to the King of Würtemberg, April 2, 1811.

[2] Napoleon to the Emperor Alexander, April 8, 1811.

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These characteristic words describe the mental and moral state of Napoleon alone, and not that of his adversaries. It was he in fact, and not Europe, who was drawn on by the fatality to which he alludes; for while maintaining his rights, with no wish to be the aggressor even in support of a good cause, Alexander was strictly following the line of duty and honour, which is never subjected to the fluctuations of fatalism. Hence he was in nowise responsible for the consequences, however disastrous they might be either to himself or to France.

A firm and dignified protest against the annexation of Oldenburg, on the part of the Russian Cabinet, apprised the European governments so early as the month of March of the conflict which had broken out between the two Emperors. They could do no more than guess its different phases, but they knew at least that henceforward there was an open quarrel between them, and they awaited its issue with an anxiety that was not unmixed with hope. Although in secret necessarily favourable to a cause so much their own, they were well aware that any open indication of such sentiments would expose them to immediate and certain ruin. The first essential point they had to look to, so as to be able to take advantage of the contingencies they foresaw, was to preserve their existence. In the state of weakness to which their defeats had reduced them, they could neither stop the advance of Napoleon's armies for one single instant, nor afford any useful aid, at least at present, to Russia. It was necessary, therefore, to gain time, to dissimulate and yield until a moment should occur when they could with advantage turn round on the tyrant. Their submission and their eagerness were direct consequences of the fear with which he inspired them. All this happened naturally, as a matter of course, and was understood without being discussed; it surprised no one, and no one was offended by it. Every government of that day thoroughly understood the forcible distinction which had to be drawn between their real sentiments and their official attitude, and he who had taught them this system at the cannon's mouth, at a later day alone persisted in calling that conduct ungrateful and treacherous which was the natural result of his own tyranny.

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In the month of April, 1811, Napoleon, perceiving that Champagny had grown taciturn and reserved, a fact which in his eyes implied secret disapprobation, deprived him of the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and appointed Maret, Duc de Bassano, Secretary of State in his stead. A faithful and devoted interpreter of his master's thoughts, and long accustomed to correct their form and to give them that style which they did not naturally possess, Maret was only too well inclined to sympathise with all the passions and ideas of the Emperor. He entertained an unbounded admiration for him, and worshipped his sense of infallibility, although not a little conceited as to his own merits. A minister of this kind was not suited to restore to our diplomacy the prestige which it lost when Talleyrand retired from it; indeed he merely reflected with greater emphasis the violent and incoherent language of the master under whose inspirations he acted. In fact, it may safely be asserted that Maret's appointment extinguished all hope of any intermediate agent between Napoleon and those who wished to treat with him. Such entire absence of moderation or palliation was not calculated to facilitate any compromise. At that precise moment, however, when diplomatic persuasion was altogether supplanted by irresistible force, the drawbacks of such a method were but imperfectly noticed, and full light was not thrown upon them until the time came when that force itself was wavering.

It was Maret, therefore, who received the answer of the Austrian Cabinet to the singular question which Champagny had addressed to it in the name of the Emperor. Since his marriage with Marie-Louise no longer inspired the Court of Vienna with the same terror or hatred that it once did, though admiring neither Napoleon nor his system, they felt protected against him by the bonds which united the two sovereigns, and strong enough to make their own conditions; and while wishing to compromise themselves as little as possible, were anxious to hold themselves in readiness to take advantage either of any victory that might be gained by us, or, on the other hand, of our defeat. To attain this result, a neutral, conciliatory,

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colourless policy, which should give hopes to all parties without entering into engagements with any, was the safest and at the same time the wisest attitude for Austria to adopt. Metternich excelled precisely in such scientific temporising, which required a far greater use of theories than of words or actions. In this respect he was ably seconded by the Emperor Francis, who played the part towards Napoleon of the good father of a family, retired from public affairs, pretending to occupy himself no longer with anything but his own pleasures, and speaking of himself as a disappointed man, who was determined to meddle no further in politics. To the question addressed to him by Napoleon on the subject of Moldo-Wallachia, Metternich answered that Austria without doubt possessed the greatest interest in the Danubian Provinces, and that the subject formed a most serious grievance on her part against Russia, but that she could not look upon it as an immediate cause for war, considering the state of exhaustion to which the last campaign had reduced her. From this reply it was clear that Austria would not resist a threatening injunction from Napoleon, but that she would follow him unwillingly, making him pay dearly for her services, and being firmly determined to abandon him on the first occasion.[1]

The situation of Prussia was quite different. That power was so fatally condemned to conspire against us by the intolerable insults to which we had subjected her ever since Tilsit, and would derive so much benefit from our reverses, that she found it impossible not to suppose that Napoleon's first act, before beginning the campaign against Russia, would be to consummate her ruin. Such a prospect naturally terrified Prussia. Hence, on the first rumour of a rupture, she rushed to the front and eagerly offered her services, before any one had even thought of asking them. Although wellnigh annihilated by the blows of Napoleon, though her territory was still partially occupied by our troops and her people crushed by taxes and war contributions, Prussia, notwithstanding, had already,

[1] Archives of Foreign Affairs. Austria, 370; Otto, April 10, 1811.

in a manner unknown to us, though under our very eyes, renewed herself by sheer dint of energy, order, labour, economy, and patient obstinacy, but above all, by a perfect and constant union between the nation and its Government. There, by good fortune as rare as it was marvellous, all, from the lowest subject up to the sovereign, united in aiming at the one end, without orders and without watchword. Universal harmony of the will had achieved this result, and discipline of the kind had never before been seen in the world. Disobedience even was turned to account; the King, for instance, having no more devoted servant than Schill the rebel. Neither *coteries* nor parties any longer existed there; every one was possessed by one thought alone—the liberation of the country.

The secret societies gave a further support to the government, by performing a task which it could not itself have undertaken, that of fostering zeal and acting as propagandists of patriotism. The efforts of Stein and Scharnhorst had not been wasted. Since the decrees of Memel, published in October, 1807, a complete political and social revolution had taken place in Prussia, without Europe having heard it so much as mentioned; a revolution without speeches, tumults, or scaffolds, but a deep and lasting revolution; one which had infused fresh youth and vigour into Frederic's old monarchy. The new rights granted to the citizens and peasants had released them from all feudal subjection, had raised them in considerable numbers into territorial proprietors, and had called them to take a share in local influences and in the management of their own interests. Schools and centres of teaching had been multiplied, and every feeling which contributes to form the true citizen and patriot had been roused in them. Despite the low state of the finances, public instruction had been reorganised on the elaborate though expensive plans of William von Humboldt. The University of Berlin had just been founded, and already counted, amongst its professors, men who were an honour to their age, such as Fichte, Savigny, Wolf, Schleiermacher, Hufeland, and Klaproth. The scientific and civilian mind of the nation thus remained the master and ruler of its military spirit. The army, reduced to

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42,000 men—the number fixed by the treaty of September 8, 1808—in reality contained 150,000, owing to the ingenious mechanism by which the small quantity of the levies was atoned for by their multiplicity, the regimental *cadres* being equal to 200,000 men.

But notwithstanding the marvels which Prussia had achieved by an activity thus concealed with such infinite skill, she was none the less at Napoleon's mercy. Well knowing her enemy's keen penetration, she supposed him to be far more familiar with her hostile intentions than he really was, and dreading the worst from him at so critical a moment, while restrained by no inopportune dignity or useless frankness, she offered her support to him with all the impetuosity of repentance and fear. Thus in the beginning of April, 1811, King Frederic William made overtures to our ambassador Saint-Marsan for an eventual treaty of alliance between France and Prussia. Shortly afterwards, being encouraged by insinuations from Napoleon, who wished to know how far they were disposed to go at Berlin, the King himself drew up the draft of a treaty, which Krusemarck, his minister, was to transmit to the Emperor. According to this draft, Napoleon was to undertake to guarantee the integrity of her actual possessions to Prussia, the King on his part promising in return to furnish him with a corps of auxiliaries in the event of 'France finding herself engaged in war either in Germany, *or on the frontiers of Prussia.*'[1]

This circumlocution, which was necessary in order to designate Russia, showed the inconvenience of signing such a treaty too long beforehand. But the offer of a corps of auxiliaries was taking Napoleon on his weak side, for he was asking every one for soldiers and sailors, even his very enemies, and he pushed his ardour for enrolments to a complete mania. Not only had he Poles, Germans, Italians, Dutch, Swiss, Illyrians, and Dalmatians in his armies, but even Spaniards and Portuguese. His genius was of itself to supply the absence of all patriotic stimulus amongst this international gathering, and even when he

[1] Letter of the King of Prussia to Krusemarck, May 14, 1811.

could not under any circumstance calculate upon the co-operation of so strange a medley, he regarded them as so many hostages for the fidelity of their sovereigns. The King at the same time wrote to the Emperor of Russia, informing him that, not being able to remain neutral, he was about to ally himself with France.[1] Alexander, however, gave but slight heed to the announcement, being perfectly certain that Prussia would return to him when he obtained success. Napoleon, on the other hand, aware of what he might henceforth expect from Prussian civility, observed an enigmatical and deep silence on the proposal of alliance, thereby subjecting the patient virtues of the Berlin Cabinet to a severe trial. What designs did this reserve conceal? Did it not announce that the destruction of Prussia was resolved upon by Napoleon? Was it prudent, on the other hand, to turn back to Russia before the rupture became certain? Would not the latter still feel sore at so recent a defection?

The perplexity of the Prussian statesmen soon reached its climax, from the uncertainty in which they were kept by Napoleon's studied silence. They freed themselves from it by a resolution, apparently most hazardous, but in reality far cleverer, and above all far more honourable, than the obsequiousness they had at first shown him. They openly commenced fortifying the few strong places still left to them, and announced their intention of arming, alleging in excuse for such measures the very motive which Napoleon had given to Russia, namely, the necessity of placing Prussia in a state of defence against the pretended landing of the English. But this was just one of those lies, the monopoly of which he reserved to himself, and he took the joke very ill. '*They might have tried to deceive Russia,*' he wrote to Saint-Marsan, '*by saying that they were sending troops against the English, but they know full well that the English will not land!*' Subterfuges were no longer in season. Seeing that his country was compromised with Russia, without having gained the protection of France, Hardenberg threw off the mask, and boldly declared to our ambassador 'that it would be

[1] Frederic William to Alexander, May 16, 1811.

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better to die sword in hand than to fall dishonourably; and that it was for France to choose between a faithful ally, or a struggle of the most desperate character.'[1] Krusemarck had orders to make a similar statement to Maret, and to add that Prussia could at once place 100,000 men under arms. This bold and skilful step at first exasperated Napoleon. In the first moment of anger he despatched all the necessary orders to Davout for crushing Prussia, if she did not instantly cease her preparations, but as he was at the same time to intimate that the treaty of alliance would be the reward of disarmament,[2] he found little difficulty in obtaining satisfaction on that point. Under these new conditions, however, the position of each side had singularly changed, and from having wished to abuse his advantage over Prussia, one might almost say that instead of imposing the treaty, Napoleon now had to accept it.[3]

Russia made no effort to deprive us of alliances, the unsteadiness of which was no secret to her. St. Petersburg, Vienna, and Berlin were too intimately united by close identity of interests to require written engagements or reciprocal apologies. They were certain to understand each other without explanations, and to find themselves reunited, whenever the decisive hour should arrive. This was the case even in small kingdoms, such as Saxony, which up to a certain point were our natural allies. They were still obedient, it is true, but they too held themselves in readiness to take advantage of contingencies.[4] From the moment that Alexander adopted the tactics of retiring before our army with a view to draw it on into the depths of Russia, had he asked Prussia or Austria to declare

[1] Hardenberg to Krusemarck, August 30, 1811.

[2] Maret to Saint-Marsan, September 13, 1811.

[3] Saint-Marsan's despatches of the months of August and September are especially significant (*Arch. des Affaires Etrangères: Prusse*, 213). See likewise on these negotiations, Bignon, vol. x; Schoel, *Histoire abrégée des traités*, vol. x, and *les Mémoires tirés des papiers d'un homme d'Etat*, vol. xi.

[4] See the Memoirs of the Comte de Senfft, then chief minister of the King of Saxony.

themselves openly for him, the only result would have been the instant annihilation of forces which it was far more politic to preserve in their integrity for a later period. Turkey and Sweden were two powers with which it was important for him to be allied, because they might either cover or menace the two flanks of his immense empire. He felt certain, whenever he wished it, of obtaining at least the neutrality of Turkey by making peace with her. But thanks to the obliging communications liberally furnished by the English, the authorities at Constantinople were perfectly familiar with all the perfidy which Napoleon had employed against the Porte in recompense for its long fidelity; his advances were, consequently, very badly received there, and they almost openly scoffed at his ambassador, Latour-Maubourg. As to Sweden, which like Turkey had been one of our oldest allies, the Russians were certain of detaching her from us, since they were assisted by a most powerful agent, no less a personage than Napoleon himself.

Since Bernadotte's refusal to join in enforcing the continental blockade against neutrals, our relations with Sweden had become more and more unpleasant, a fact that in itself led to the beginning of an identity of interests between that country and Russia, which stood exactly in the same position. Bernadotte, like Alexander, would not consent utterly to ruin his kingdom for an insane idea, and facts already furnished them both with striking reasons in vindication of their resistance.

A most serious industrial and commercial crisis had just taken place in France (March, 1811), and no one could entertain the slightest doubt that it had been caused by the continental system. The sufferings which France had to endure, in spite of the advantages of her privileged situation, were proof sufficient of what other countries must have experienced which did not possess her agricultural riches, her industrial monopoly, the fraudulent profits she derived from the licences, or the spoils of vanquished nations. In such a state of things, the prohibition against neutrals was literally equivalent to condemning Sweden

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to starvation. Napoleon none the less persisted in trying to impose this impracticable law upon her, maintaining with the utmost imperturbability, 'that there were no neutrals, for all the neutrals were English.' And when the testimony of an American minister, certifying the nationality of the vessels belonging to his own country, was quoted against this assertion, Napoleon unhesitatingly answered, '*There are no American ships. If the American Minister states the contrary, he does not know what he is saying.*'[1]

So senseless a course was certain to throw Sweden sooner or later into the arms of Russia. Her sympathies, however, were still with France. She had resisted the overtures made to her by Alexander, who had offered her Norway in December, 1810, and nothing would have been easier than to have won her back to our side. Napoleon, too, notwithstanding his extraordinary infatuation, was often tempted to overcome his personal repugnance to Bernadotte, in order to attach him definitively to his cause. In the month of March, 1811, he made an effort at reconciliation by condescending, despite his previous refusals, to write to him directly; and Bernadotte was keenly sensible of this advance, for he had felt deeply grieved at finding himself drawn into a quarrel with the country of his birth. Napoleon did not consent, however, any more than before, to let him take Norway, which belonged to our ally, the King of Denmark, and which Bernadotte was eagerly longing for, that he might have something to offer the Swedes as a gift on his arrival amongst them; but he formally engaged to help them to reconquer Finland in the event of a war with Russia.[2]

In consequence of this communication, our relations with Sweden had become nearly cordial, when an unforeseen event, the almost inevitable result of the continental system, occurred, which rendered them more difficult than ever. Two French privateers having seized some Swedish vessels on pretext of their having infringed the regulations of the blockade, took refuge in the port of Stralsund, where they were ill-treated

[1] Napoleon to Maret, July 15, 1811.
[2] Champagny to Alquier, April 15, 1811.

by the Pomeranian conscripts. Bernadotte could not, without lowering himself in the opinion of his new compatriots, permit any stranger to arrogate to himself the right of acting the policeman in his territory, and especially in such an aggressive manner. On his side, Napoleon was not the man to disavow his privateers. He demanded the punishment of the ring-leaders of the riot in peremptory language, the haughtiness and severity of which was not softened by Alquier, his Minister in Sweden. Alquier, an old member of the Convention, but long since reconciled to the tyranny against which he had formerly so often declaimed, was totally devoid of tact and moderation. The demagogue in fact was still to be found beneath the diplomatist. 'Wounding every one,' as Caulaincourt expressed it, he hated Bernadotte, and his dispatches home were couched in the most violent style. They were full of nothing but Bernadotte's madness, his mediocrity, his good-natured triviality, his silly incapacity, and the absurdity of his dress. Such reports were not calculated to have a calming effect upon Napoleon.

But this incident, lamentable though it was, could not be considered as a rupture with Sweden, so important an ally in the event of a war with Russia, for the simple reason that she could turn all the Russian armies and directly menace St. Petersburg. How much stronger reason was there not for indulgence and moderation, if the privateers had really exceeded their powers in attacking the Swedish vessels? and in the end, this was precisely what Napoleon himself admitted. Writing to Davout a little later, he declared in so many express words, 'that the privateers had abused General Rapp's influence, by ravaging the coasts and committing injustices which involved France in quarrels.'[1] But ought the Emperor to admit that his agents, even the most insignificant, could have been wrong? Must he not sustain the *prestige* and supremacy of the Empire above all else? Alquier was recalled, it is true, from Stockholm, but not before he had had time to exasperate Bernadotte's

[1] Napoleon to Davout, December 2, 1811.

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susceptibility, and to destroy all chance of reconciliation. Driven to extremities by our harsh proceedings, too weak to remain isolated in the midst of the convulsions of Europe, and forced at length to look to her own safety, Sweden receded from us and turned more and more towards Russia.[1]

[1] *Archives des Affaires Etrangères: Suède*, 296. Alquier's despatches of July, August, and September, 1811.

CHAPTER VI.

ORGANISATION OF THE ARMY OF ATTACK ON RUSSIA.—MEASURES AGAINST THE REFRACTORY CONSCRIPTS.—INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL CRISIS.—SESSION OF 1811.—BIRTH OF THE KING OF ROME.—THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.—IMMINENCE OF A RUPTURE WITH RUSSIA. (*May—December* 1811.)

The above-mentioned negotiations, even when crowned with success, were nevertheless unfortunate, as they were incapable of procuring for us other than false friendships; nor could they reconcile any one to the domineering rule which inspired no feelings but hatred and distrust. But they were far from occupying the first place in the Emperor's mind. A number of other important affairs divided his attention. In the first rank stood the settlement of the difficulties with the Church and the Papacy; difficulties which made little noise, but which none the less kept deep discontent alive amongst the population of the Empire; next came the industrial and commercial crisis, which was the consequence—long delayed but absolutely fatal—of the measures regarding the blockade; lastly, and chief of all, were his military preparations against Russia, then the object of his predilection, his daily and hourly thought, the principal, essential, and sole point upon which he concentrated his incomparable talent for organisation. If one considers that at the same time he contrived to attend to every detail of the interior administration of his immense Empire, and to direct the military operations of Spain and Portugal from Paris,

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it will not seem surprising that his activity, prodigious though it was, proved unequal to such a task, or that well-nigh overpowered by the extent and multiplicity of his affairs, he no longer touched any of them except, so to speak, by fitful impulses, and never with that steadiness or assiduity which is so indispensable for their proper management.

A defect of this kind was now more serious than ever, because method, certainty, and judgment, qualities essential for the supreme direction of so vast and varied an amount of business, were beginning to fail him, and his genius, though still powerful, was running to exaggeration and disorder. Though as fertile as ever in expedients, in talent for combination, in resources of every description, and in an astonishing power in the art of subordinating the smallest details to the attainment of his ends, he had lost, if indeed he ever possessed it, that delicate tact and higher sense which at the first glance discovers the inherent possibility of an enterprise, and the limits which cannot be overstepped. But in the arrangement of military matters, where the first essential consisted in administering and organising the immense resources under his hand, and where the operations depended less on moral appreciation than on calculations made with almost mathematical precision, his genius shone forth in all its practical strength, and all its marvellous creative power. Ever since he had foreseen and almost determined upon war with Russia, he had applied himself unceasingly to the formation of an army that should prove worthy of the gigantic projects of universal dominion which he had conceived—in other words, one such as the world had never yet beheld. By the number and force of that army, it was evident, that, even in his own eyes, his plans were beyond the common order of things, and that their success depended altogether upon victory. But if they were thus unstable and unjustifiable, he was at least resolved to give them a material support beyond all precedent. Had not his policy been always at variance with prudence and with the spirit of his age, and was it not his sword which had uniformly settled all difficulties?

In truth, the army destined for what he already began to call

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'the Russian war' was everything in his eyes, and he cared little whether that war were contrary to all principles of reason and justice or not, provided he considered himself certain of success. No sooner did his original fear of being taken unawares subside, than the question of success began to seem less and less doubtful. In the month of December, 1810, the conscription had furnished 120,000 men, the amount of the levy of 1811, to which he proposed to add 30,000 more above the age of fourteen for the naval conscription. The measure had been praised by orators in the Senate, as a mark of exceptional generosity, since it was the first time for many years that the conscription had not been made by an anticipatory levy; but no one seemed to notice the bitter irony contained in the fact of their considering the strict carrying out of the law, as a kindness vouchsafed to them by the Emperor. The recruits were drafted into skeleton regiments (*cadres*) taken from the old corps of the army of Germany. Owing to these reinforcements, the corps of observation formed upon the Elbe, the Rhine, and in Italy, soon became real armies, the first comprising five divisions, and the two others four. A reserve corps, composed of four other divisions, was formed in the south of France, whence reinforcements could be sent to Spain or Italy as the case might require. At the same time all the Princes of the Germanic Confederation were desired to furnish their contingents. These preparations were pushed forward with so much activity, that Davout, who commanded the corps of observation on the Elbe, had in June 1811, 200,000 men ready to march at the first signal. His corps d'armée amounted to 120,000 men, the King of Saxony had 24,000, the Duchy of Warsaw 34,000, and the King of Westphalia 15,900.[1] Thus on June 16, the day of the opening of the legislative session, Montalivet was able to print in his 'Statement of the situation of the Empire' that 'France had 800,000 men under arms!'

Notwithstanding the laudatory strains of the official reporters

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, June 23, 1811.

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of the Senatus-Consultum on the conscription, as to the zeal and eagerness with which the youth of France were rushing to glory,[1] these great results were no longer obtained without the greatest efforts, and after considerable resistance. The profound silence so systematically observed on our losses in Spain had not prevented the truth from oozing out. Though it might not be precisely known to what extent the war in that country had been disastrous, it was at least known that it had been most sanguinary, and the news of the fresh one which was arising, without the justification of any necessity or interest whatsoever, threw the public into a species of stupor. Families tried by every means in their power to withhold their children from military service, and the number of young men who escaped from it by flight had increased to unheard-of proportions. Two facts alone suffice to show the true value of the pleasing fictions of the senatorial orators; first, that in that very year of 1811, 8000 francs (representing double that sum at the present day), was paid for a substitute,[2] and secondly, that the number of refractory conscripts amounted to nearly 80,000.

These delinquents, however, were the aggregate result of several years' resistance to the law, and their disobedience was too permanent a scandal to be longer tolerated. The government of that day possessed more authority than was absolutely necessary for bringing them to order, and no one could have disapproved of its putting down such a rebellion had the ministers used the means of constraint which the law afforded them. But legal measures, even though cruel in certain cases, were far from satisfying Napoleon's impatience and state of irritation. What he wanted, was not so much to succeed in suppressing the crime, as to be able to put his hand promptly on so large and energetic a reserve, and to embody it, at all costs, in his army. Speedily to attain this result, the most

[1] Reports of St. Jean d'Angély and of Lacepède; Sittings of the 10th and 13th of December 1810.

[2] The author has the above fact from an unimpeachable witness; from a man, in short, who speaks of what happened to *himself*.

expeditious method was to involve the greatest number possible in the arrests, and to interest even the relations and friends of each refractory conscript against him by attacking them on his account.

This barbarous expedient had been conceived and practised by the Directory against the insurgents of La Vendée, but the first Consul had prided himself on abolishing it, at a period when he was merciful by calculation. Now, however, it was not considered enough to reestablish the principle of the *Laws of Hostages* which had formerly been so justly condemned; but it was generalized, by extending it not only to the family of the refractory conscript, but to his whole *commune*, and sometimes even to the entire canton. The penalty was one calculated to fall most heavily on the poor, for it consisted in having to lodge, feed, and pay a certain number of soldiers called *garnisaires*, until the refractory individual should have submitted. The fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, of the delinquent, all those in whose houses he might have eaten, drunk, or slept, and lastly the very *commune* itself, were successively made responsible for a purely personal offence.[1]

Even these merciless proceedings did not operate sufficiently fast to please Napoleon, and the *garnisaires* were supported by bodies of soldiers, known under the name of *Infernal Columns*, which levied contributions, and spread terror throughout whole districts. Such measures undoubtedly proved efficacious, but they show what the formation of a *grande armée* then cost, and into what a degree of languor the nation had sunk despite its traditionary taste for military life. Any means were considered good in order to elude so severe a service, but, on the other hand, so were any means which could be used to force men into it; and if flight was of little avail, immunity was no better secured either by those who had retired on half pay, or who could afford to obtain substitutes. Both these latter classes were invariably included after a certain lapse of time in new categories, and it was not rare to meet

[1] See the decrees in the *Bulletin des Lois*,—although somewhat incomplete—of January 12, April 5, and September 13, 1811.

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young men who had paid three or four times running in order to be exempted, and yet were not on that account any more certain of escape.

Even so abridged a statement of the popular sufferings shows how dearly the French nation paid for the honour—which had by this time become a rather doubtful one—of having given a master to Europe. And even this was not all, for the evils created by the 'continental system' were far more cruel. That the blockade was the direct and principal cause of the industrial crisis which exhausted France during the winter of 1811, no one can seriously contest, even though it may be admitted that our interminable wars also contributed towards it not a little. One of the advantages which Napoleon had discovered in this strange plan, after it had been put in force, was its creating, in favour of France, a sort of industrial and commercial monopoly. Our manufacturers, in fact, by means of the licences and sales of seized goods, received the only raw materials, such as cotton, dye-woods, indigo, &c., that were admitted upon the continent, and were consequently enabled to maintain the privilege of manufacturing them, besides also calculating on the markets of Europe even though they possessed no outlet by sea. The same applied to all other colonial products of which he had contrived to reserve for us the exclusive trade, under the restricted conditions to which he had reduced it.

On this data, so theoretically reassuring, our manufacturers had ventured upon an extraordinary production. On the other hand, speculators vied with each other in laying in a stock of colonial products, calculated for the consumption of the whole of Europe. But, however just this calculation might seem in theory, it could not but prove false in practice, because the extraordinary rise in prices which followed upon the blockade had not been sufficiently taken into account. In the first place, the English, owing to our measures against neutrals, and by the repressive competition, had absolute control of the price of such colonial merchandise as they alone possessed, and this they sold to the holders of licenses at enormous rates. They made them pay four or five francs for a pound of sugar that

did not cost them more than half a franc. Thus the trader provided with a licence bought his goods at a very high price; and then had to add to their cost first that of the merchandise which he had been obliged to throw into the sea, because Napoleon had forced him to export it, though it was prohibited in England, then the very heavy sum he gave for the purchase of the licence itself, and lastly his own profits. It is easy to understand the high figure which goods burdened with similar charges must have attained, before they reached either our manufactories or our shops. The produce of the seizures became equally unpurchaseable from the successive duties, especially that of fifty per cent, which Napoleon imposed upon them.

The result was exactly what ought to have been foreseen, namely, that the goods remained unsold. Their high prices were equivalent to a premium to smugglers, who reaped all the profits lost by the regular trade. The manufacturers had to stop their works; the banks that advanced money to them, not being repaid their advances, had to suspend payments, and all trade being more or less interdependent, and affected by the war, even those branches of it which seemed least subject to foreign influence, such as the wool and silk departments, were involved in the common disaster.

Napoleon endeavoured to check the crisis by an advance of some millions, which he caused to be made to the merchants who suffered most, without paying any attention to the wise representations of Mollien, and other competent men by whom he was surrounded. He never could be made to admit that his will, which was capable of achieving so much, would have no influence on credit. Such assistance saved no one. He lent as much as 1,500,000 francs to one single house,[1] but was soon obliged to relinquish such aid owing to the enormous amount of the demands.

The orders for military provisions, and furniture for the Imperial Palaces, in some measure alleviated the distress of the working classes; but even if all the resources of the government had

[1] Mollien, *Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor*.

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been exclusively devoted to allaying the evil, they would have proved insufficient to revive the state of business. The only effectual remedy for so much misery would have been the withdrawal of the measures which had brought on the crisis; but that was the one step which Napoleon would never allow to be mentioned. On the 25th of March 1811, the delegates of the Chamber of Commerce, headed by the two great manufacturers of the day, Martin and Ternaux, having endeavoured to offer some timid observations on the remedies applicable to the evils from which trade and commerce were suffering, he cut them short without allowing them to say one word on the subject of their grievances. Launching forth into a long and incoherent apology for the continental system and for his policy, intermingled with menaces, aimed at Russia, which were at least ill-judged at a time when he was still anxious to deceive her and to conceal his armaments, he said:—

'Merchants were complaining as usual, and yet it was by their fault that the crisis had occurred. They had wished to enrich themselves at any cost, to enrich themselves too rapidly, to win fortunes as one wins a battle, instead of calculating on the invariably slow results of labour and economy. They had no one but themselves to blame if they were the victims of their own avidity. As to him, he had remained faithful to his system, which consisted in subduing England. His decrees of Berlin and of Milan had been much derided, but nevertheless England was now declining, *she was ruined!* He had possession of the whole coast of Europe, he built five and twenty ships every year, before long he would have a navy of two hundred vessels, and England would be forced to submit. Until then, woe betide any Continental State which would refuse to second him! He would *cut with his sword* every intrigue that the English might try to concoct with such powers; he would annex every such state as he had annexed all those who had resisted him. At Tilsit, he had *favoured* the Emperor of Russia in return for his promises of support, but if those promises were not kept, he would go *to Riga, to Moscow, to St. Petersburg*, if necessary! He was not simply a King of France, he

was *Emperor of the Continent*, he had 200,000,000 francs in the cellars of the Tuileries. France was the richest country on the globe, and in any case he would not change one iota in his customs tariff; of that they might be quite certain.'

A rambling speech like this, which touched upon every point except the precise subject of the commercial grievances, produced no other effect than that of informing Napoleon's astonished hearers, that in addition to his old rooted idea of subduing England by starving Europe, a new idea of seeking for a fresh enemy at the extremity of the Continent, was beginning to haunt the Imperial brain. The threats aimed at Russia in this unfortunate allocution created an immense sensation abroad. For some time the public offices and the newspapers were solely occupied in reproducing it in every variety, and the impression produced seemed so bad even to the Emperor himself, that he caused a summary of the speech to be published, which amounted almost to a retractation.

It was, however, perfectly true, as he had stated, that the continental crisis reverberated in England. That country undoubtedly could not fail to feel the effects of the general suffering throughout Europe, were it merely by reaction, but the form it took in England was that of accumulation and superabundance, which is not exactly the same as suffering arising from distress. Her docks, now become the entrepôt of the world, were overflowing with merchandise, principally sugar and coffee. The cotton trade alone had been seriously affected by imprudent speculations.[1] In France, the instances of accumulation had occurred only in some manufactories, and on the part of some privileged holders of foreign produce, whilst everywhere else, the most utter destitution and confirmed poverty prevailed. In England, on the contrary, this unusual accumulation of riches and products of every description had taken place throughout the industrial and commercial classes; for, although the destruction of competition had entirely operated in their favour, no sufficient outlets could momentarily

[1] Report of the Select Committee on the state of Commercial Credit, March, 1811.

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be found for their goods, however certain they might be of ultimately recovering their position in foreign markets. Proof of this exists in that inexhaustible fund of credit which permitted England to borrow 1,000,000,000 francs a year; a difficult problem truly, and one which the master of Europe could not certainly have solved in his favour.

On the 20th of March 1811, precisely when the crisis was at its worst, that child was born whose birth had been announced by Napoleon even before he was wedded to Marie-Louise, as though nature itself was one of his subjects and but too happy to obey him. The same acclamations which had greeted the Imperial marriage, resounded around the cradle of the King of Rome, for enthusiasm had long since ceased to be more than a machine scientifically organised and set in motion at will. But the hopes of peace originally founded on the Austrian marriage, had been too cruelly deceived to allow of their being again entertained, and public confidence had no place this time in the manifestations of official joy. No event ever was more loudly sung and celebrated in the churches, the palaces, and even the most obscure villages. The 101 guns which announced it to Paris, were repeated from Dantzig to Cadiz, in every spot where we had a regiment or a battery of artillery. Wellington relates in his correspondence, with a surprise not far from irony, how an officer came to inform him on the part of Masséna, then in full retreat, of the inoffensive nature of certain discharges of artillery. Notwithstanding the warning, he believed, he says, that an attack was intended, for it seemed to him too improbable that so joyous a demonstration could be made by an army that was exposed to such suffering. How many times had those same guns and those same soldiers announced to the world our oaths of 'eternal war to tyrants!' How could they be supposed now to proclaim anything but our never ceasing restlessness? and if—as it was said with most surprising simplicity—the birth of the Imperial heir ensured the perpetuity of the *régime*, what hope could those unfortunate men have of ever beholding the end of their woes?

The Senate and the Council of State on this occasion came forward with their customary adulation: 'We are the first,' said the President of the Senate, 'to bear to the foot of the throne the echoes of those transports of delight, and those shouts of joy which the birth of the King of Rome has called forth throughout the whole Empire. Your people greet with universal acclamation *this new star* which has risen on the horizon of France, and whose first ray disperses the very smallest shadows of the darkness of the future.'[1] The whole senatorial harangue was in the same ecstatic strain, and this passage must not be considered an exceptional exaggeration; I quote it rather because no one could form a true idea of the abject servility of the public authorities of that period, unless I reproduced the accent and dominant tone of the official language. This specimen will give an idea of the flights of imagination which must have been taken by poets whose professed duty it was to go much farther. Beyond the stars there were but the gods, and amongst them it was that they searched for comparisons with which to greet the arrival of the *new Messiah*.[2] The *Moniteur* published numberless paraphrases of a celebrated verse:—

'Jam nova progenies coelo dimittitur alto.'—'Lightning flashes, the heavens open and present thy likeness beneath the features of thy son.'[3]

Owing to the Legislative Body not being convoked until two months later, it missed the opportunity of evincing its zeal in flattering its master. But on the other hand, it was admitted somewhat later to the special honour of presenting its respects to the child itself. The president of this Legislative Body, which was the direct descendant of the Constituent Assembly and the Convention, went at the head of a select deputation to harangue the infant when two months old. He spoke to it of the attachment of the Assembly, and received and transmitted to his colleagues the

[1] Speech of Comte Garnier, President of the Senate, March 22, 1811.
[2] *Le Noël Nouveau, hommage d'un troubadour*, par Armand Gouffé.
[3] Delrieu.

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answer made by the *gouvernante!* The following are the terms in which he reported his glorious mission: 'We conveyed to him, gentlemen, the expression of your most tender sentiments, mingled with such wishes as the love of our children inspires us with. *Madame la gouvernante* received them, and thanked us in the name of the young Prince, regretting no doubt that she was unable to add his personal sentiments to those which she expressed to the Legislative Body.'[1]

The speech thus delivered beside the cradle of the King of Rome, was wellnigh the greatest achievement of the legislative session of 1811. Napoleon, as we already said, had long since intended to suppress the Legislative Body, as he had previously suppressed the Tribunates. But, before striking the decisive blow at this phantom of an assembly, he wished that every one should be convinced of its inutility. He therefore deprived it by degrees of all its real attributes, supplied laws by means of decrees, by a Senatus-Consultum, or even by mere decisions, and at length succeeded in leaving it no business to transact. In 1811 this became more evident than ever. Hence in 1812 he no longer took the futile precaution of convoking a Legislative Body, whose absence was scarcely noticed, so cleverly had the public been prepared for the suppression of this useless piece of machinery. The official reports of the session of 1811 form one of those historic monuments which most fully exhibit the spirit of the Napoleonic institutions, and of the part which Bonaparte wished to assign to the national representation, for it was then and then only, that, having been brought to a state of perfection by slow degrees, the Legislative Body attained the definite form he had always destined for it—that, namely, of an absolute cypher. The reports of the twenty sittings of which the session of 1811 was composed occupied only fifty pages.

The budget, which was the single important matter brought before the Assembly, was adopted and voted in one sitting, upon a report consisting of a few lines by the Deputy Mollérus,

[1] Speech of President de Montesquieu at the sitting of July 25, 1811.

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and without one speech being made upon the motion.[1] The other sittings were occupied by the Emperor's message; by a statement of the situation of the Empire, drawn up by the Minister Montalivet; by the appointment of the officials; the reports of the works presented to the Legislative Body; the eulogiums passed on deceased members; finally, by laws authorizing alienations, and purchases or exchanges of communal property,—the only legislative business that had been left to the representatives of the nation. When these matters were gone through, the deputies retired with the same resignation which they had displayed in assembling, accompanied by ironical marks of respect, a thousand times sharper in their derisive pomp than the bayonets at whose points they had once been driven from the Orangery at St. Cloud.

Owing to the very barren results of this session, the two Imperial manifestoes which marked its opening were the more commented upon. After casting a glance at the situation of Europe, at the late annexations of territory,—which were represented to be the natural consequence of 'the principles adopted by the English government,'—and at the progressive diminution of the Spanish insurrection, the Emperor alluded to the last battles fought by Wellington, and declared that 'English blood has at length flowed in streams.' This exclamation was prompted by the wish of his heart, and made a great and lasting sensation in Europe. Far from taking into account the strength which England, by fighting in the heart of the Peninsula, had imparted to Spanish resistance, he looked upon her presence there only as affording him the certainty of conquering her in Spain instead of having to pursue her on the ocean. He foretold that a day was coming when 'half her families would be plunged into mourning, and a clap of thunder would avenge Europe and Asia by terminating this second Punic war.'[2] And this was all the instruction he had derived from the grave events that had just taken place in the Peninsula!

The *report on the situation of the Empire*, which was read at

[1] Sitting of July 15, 1811. *Archives parlementaires.*

[2] Speech at the opening of the Legislative Body, June 10, 1811.

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the sitting of June 26, was a mere paraphrase of the Imperial message, but its matter-of-fact style proved, even better than the message itself, the extraordinary depth of Napoleon's illusions. It especially contained an examination of the comparative state of France and England, perfectly alarming from its one-sided optimism. In France every thing was going on in the very best manner; the *continental system had changed nothing in our situation*; the prohibition of English merchandise had given us the markets of the Continent; France might continue in the same state for ten years, defraying all her expenses and yet not increasing her debt. England, on the contrary, had closed half her counting-houses, borrowed 800 millions a year, and had no resource left but bankruptcy; moreover, we soon should have one hundred and fifty ships of the line to impose peace upon her; 'peace which would no doubt be useful to us, but was far more to be desired by our enemies!'[1]

The report, like the message, made allusion to Napoleon's differences with the Holy See, but without giving any idea of the insulting manner in which he had behaved towards Pius VII personally. 'If the half of Europe has separated itself from the Church of Rome,' he said, not untruly, 'it may be especially attributed to the contradiction which has not yet ceased to exist between the principles of religion that are for the universe, and the pretensions and interests that only regard a very small corner of Italy. I have put an end to this scandal for ever, I have annexed Rome to the Empire. I have granted palaces to the Popes in Rome and in Paris. If they have the interests of religion at heart, they will desire to reside often at the centre of the affairs of Christendom. It was for this reason that St. Peter preferred Rome to the Holy Land.' Montalivet completely withdrew the veil by announcing that 'the Pope's refusal to institute the Bishops nominated by the Emperor had rendered the Concordat null, *and that it no longer existed*.'[2]

The majority of the public was thus for the first time made

[1] *Exposé de la situation de l'Empire*, June 29, 1811.

[2] Statement on the situation of the Empire, June 29, 1811.

acquainted with the serious nature of a quarrel, the existence of which they had hitherto scarcely noticed. At the same time they were informed that a Council, which was about to be held in Paris, would decide 'whether France, like Germany, should do without an Episcopate.' What could have passed between the Pope and the Emperor to induce the very author of the Concordat to proclaim a transaction null and void, on which he had prided himself so often as a masterpiece of wisdom? or to make the implacable enemy to all discussion and assemblies of his own accord convoke a Council, which was in every respect a kind of States-General of the Church of France?

The cause was not far to seek. It simply lay in the fact that Napoleon's disputes with the Holy Father had of late, from the patient tenacity of the Pontiff and the violence of the Emperor, assumed such a degree of exasperation, that the counsellors of the latter had ultimately by urgent entreaty persuaded him to adopt this middle course, and had thus succeeded in diverting him from the deplorable extremities to which he was on the point of being led. No fresh resolve, no new acts on the part of Pius VII had provoked his anger. Separated from all his advisers, held in captivity at Savona, despoiled not only of all his privileges but of all his rights, the Pope continued to use the sole weapon that had been left to him for the recovery of his liberty, by refusing to institute the Bishops nominated by the Emperor. With the view of forcing him to give up this purely defensive position, Napoleon had with very great ingenuity devised a method in which his selected Bishops might be instituted provisionally, by obliging the chapters to elect them as Vicars-Capitular, thus conferring on them a temporary right to administer the dioceses. This expedient, by which institution by the Pope was dispensed with, would in the end have neutralized his opposition, if Pius VII had not sent the chapters express orders forbidding them to elect as Vicars-Capitular any of the Bishops so nominated. This step, which in no wise exceeded his spiritual powers, and was a measure strictly conservative of a right that undeniably belonged to the

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Holy See, was the only one which the prisoner of Savona had permitted himself since the overtures made to him by Napoleon at Savona through Cardinals Spina and Caselli.

Foremost amongst the Chapters which received this order were those of Florence, Asti, and especially Paris, which had long struggled against a Bishop nominated but not instituted, namely, Cardinal Maury, the docile and accommodating instrument of Napoleon's views. This prelate was in some sort placed under an interdict by the papal prohibition, which found many ardent and zealous promoters in the very heart of the Chapter. Chief amongst these bold opponents was the Grand-Vicar-Capitular, Canon d'Astros, on whom the perilous honour devolved of receiving the communications from Pius VII. Napoleon suspected his intrigues, and having abruptly questioned him in presence of the whole Court and the great Bodies of the State, d'Astros was confused by the Emperor's threats and invectives, and his arrest was instantly decided upon. On leaving the audience chamber, Maury himself took him in his carriage to Savary, for that minister, having been ordered to arrest him, had confided his honourable mission to the Cardinal, in order to avoid scandal.[1] There, under the cunning interrogations of the Minister of Police, d'Astros ultimately confessed not only that he had received the Pope's briefs, but had further communicated them to his cousin Portalis, Councillor of State and Director of the Library. Portalis, no doubt, had received that confidential communication, but far from having propagated the offensive document, he had apprised his friend Pasquier, the Prefect of Police, of its existence, and the only crime he could be accused of was that of not having informed upon his relative, d'Astros.

But Napoleon wished by one stroke to stop what he called, '*the scandalous fight* of the petty priesthood (*prêtaille*) against his authority.'[2] He troubled himself very little whether his grievances were legitimate or not, when once he had resolved

[1] *Mémoires* of the Duc de Rovigo.
[2] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, January ....

to produce some startling effect by intimidation. The higher the rank which the individual he intended to strike occupied amongst his special officials, the better it suited his plans. In fact, it was necessary to aim at the very highest in order to ensure the stroke having due effect. On the 4th of January, therefore, at a full meeting of the Council of State, after making some vague complaints on the subject of the ecclesiastical intrigues, he suddenly addressed the trembling Portalis, reproaching him in bitter terms for his ingratitude and treachery; and then, without allowing him time to defend himself or to recover from his confusion, ordered him to leave the Council Chamber and never again to reappear in it. The unhappy Portalis, like a man suddenly struck by lightning, murmured a few incoherent words, and then losing his head, quitted the room, leaving his colleagues, who were dumb with terror and humiliation, to face the Imperial wrath, till it spent itself on empty space and silence. Pasquier alone ventured to say something in favour of the Minister who was thus sent off in disgrace, and courageously spoke of the confidential communication that had been made to him.

This noisy scene was intended to impress upon officials and magistrates of every degree that obedience was expected from them, even to the extent of informing on their own relatives if necessary. Still more significant measures showed the clergy that ecclesiastics who might prefer to obey the Pope rather than the Emperor would be punished without mercy. Canon d'Astros was imprisoned at Vincennes and kept there until the fall of the Empire, while Cardinals di Pietro, Oppizoni, and Gabrielli, convicted of having circulated the Papal manifestoes, were soon afterwards shut up in the same fortress. The ringleaders in the Chapters at Asti and Florence, were found guilty of the same offence and sent to the prison of Fenestrella, where Cardinal Pacca and several other ecclesiastics were already confined.

But it was futile to strike the instruments, if the hand which guided them was allowed to escape. These men, after all, were mere accomplices; the true criminal, in Napoleon's eyes,

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was the Pope. But what new chastisement could he inflict upon a sovereign whom he had already despoiled of his States, and reduced to the direst captivity? In his first moment of anger the Emperor's idea was to depose the Pope, not from a principality but from the Popedom itself. A note of his exists, addressed to his librarian Barbier, and dated on the morrow of the day upon which he expelled Portalis from the Council of State, in which he inquires; 'If there are any instances of Emperors having deposed Popes?'[1] While waiting to have this doubt cleared up, he issued orders to have the prisoner of Savona treated with the utmost rigour, desired the few personal comforts he still enjoyed to be suppressed, and lowered his allowance to that of an official of the fourth rank. Nay more; he was watched and kept in sight, deprived of his carriages, forbidden all communication or correspondence with the outer world, his confessor and most special personal attendants imprisoned, his papers seized, his writing-desk, pens, breviary, and even a leather purse, containing a few gold coins, all taken from him. Finally, as a fit crown to such insults, the Fisherman's Ring, which the agents who had conducted the search had not been able to discover, was demanded from him by Lagrose, the captain of the gendarmerie. Such was the base and cowardly persecution of an infirm and defenceless old man, to which he was bold enough to resort, who one day was to complain so loudly of the harshness of his own captivity at St. Helena, a captivity which was mildness itself when compared with the manner in which he treated his adversary.[2]

These measures of intimidation, though calculated to terrify a clergy not remarkable for firmness, did not solve the difficulty, which continued the same as ever. The chapter of Paris made protestations of submission and attachment in an undignified address, and the Italian chapters imitated their example with

[1] Dated on January 25, 1811.

[2] The above insults have often been imputed to Napoleon's agents, but the inedited letters of the Emperor, which have been published by Count Haussonville, irrefragably prove that Napoleon was their author.

servile readiness. But the Episcopal Sees none the less remained vacant, for want of the canonical institution. In his impatience to end the matter, Napoleon would gladly have cut the question short by means of the Senate, but his advisers represented to him that Catholics perhaps might not consider that the authority of the Senate was sufficient for such an act. In this way, therefore, it was that the Emperor was insensibly led on to the idea, which at first sight seems so extraordinary, of convoking a Council. He had always found ecclesiastics so weak and so docile, that he felt certain of ruling a general assembly of the clergy, and of transforming it into a sort of Legislative Body for spiritual affairs. A well-directed Council would put an end to the existing difficulties, avert all danger of schism, permit him to dispense with the Pope, and perhaps to govern the Church.

Before taking so serious a step, however, it was necessary to draw up a programme of the clearest description regarding the questions which should be submitted to the Council, and to inquire as to its probable chances of success. To enlighten himself on this point, Napoleon consulted the ecclesiastical Committee, which he modified at the same time by introducing into it some prelates according to his own heart, such as Cardinal Caselli and the Abbé de Pradt, nominated, but not instituted, to the Archbishopric of Malines. The questions submitted to the Committee were the same which were to be presented to the Council. For instance, all communication with the Pope being interrupted, who was it necessary to address in order to obtain either the dispensations which he distributed, or the canonical institution which he refused to the appointed Bishops? As far as regarded the Bishops, the question was one of a most embarrassing and complicated nature.

The forms of their enthronisation had, it is true, varied very much in past times. But no matter how remote the period referred to, the intervention of both the lay and the ecclesiastical elements was always to be found in it. Even in the days when Bishops were elected, though the faithful might nominate, it was the Metropolitan who instituted them. The simultaneous

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concurrence of the two distinct powers, independent of each other, always existed in it. Besides, what Napoleon really wished was the suppression of one of those elements for the advantage of the other; for, in the actual organisation of the political and religious powers, the Metropolitan no longer possessed independence sufficient to enable him to exercise an authority which, in consequence of so many successive revolutions, had devolved upon the Pope. It would have been impossible to restore the power of institution to the Metropolitan, except by releasing him from every tie of dependence upon the civil authority; and even then, in the eyes of Catholics, the Church alone would have the competence necessary to sanction such a return to primitive traditions.

The difficulty was not a new one. It was the same, in fact, which had fettered the efforts of the Constituent Assembly when it was decreeing the civil constitution of the clergy. Since then, it has reappeared very often, under one form or another, and, as it can only be solved by the reciprocal independence of Church and State, it is not surprising that even in the present day, governments which are more solicitous for their own authority than for liberty of worship should go on aggravating the difficulty by imagining that they can terminate it by main force. The ecclesiastical Committee of 1811 could not deceive themselves as to the real significance of the Emperor's pretensions, but they were animated by an immense desire to please him, and their answer in its vagueness bears the impress of this twofold feeling. They expressed profound grief at beholding all communication broken off with the Pope, 'the centre of ecclesiastical unity,' and their hope of seeing it soon restored. They thought that Provincial Councils might institute, if the Pope refused to do so, 'without alleging a canonical reason, but the decision of the question belonged to a national Council. They, consequently, desired with all their heart that such a Council might be summoned, though not until they should have sent a deputation to the Pope to enlighten him on the wants of the Church of France.'[1]

[1] *Fragments relatifs à l'histoire ecclésiastique*, by Monsgr. de Barral, Arch-

In short, the Committee did no more than point out the course to be followed, with a view to effect a reconciliation, which they must have known to be all but hopeless. Abbé Emery, the most enlightened and eminent of its members, did not conceal from the Emperor that, in all probability, the Pope would never give up his right of institution.[1] Hence, when Napoleon decided on sending the deputation, he did so with very little expectation of success, and far more from a secret desire of casting the onus of the evil on the Pontiff's obstinacy, than from any hope of converting him to his views. Nevertheless, he took the most elaborate precautions for taking advantage of the trouble of mind into which the Pope had been thrown by the intimidation used against him.

It was the Emperor's wish that the step on the part of the Bishops should be represented to the Holy Father as a thoroughly spontaneous act of the French Episcopate, and that the programme of the Council, of which he himself was the sole author, should appear as a kind of ultimatum addressed to the Pope by the Church of France, on the point of breaking off from Rome. In order to create an effect likely to influence the prisoner at Savona, he took care to fix the time for the convocation of the Council, before the deputation started, in a circular which was nothing but a series of accusations against Pius VII. He thus seemed to have come to a decision beforehand as to a rupture, which appeared inevitable, and left the Pope no alternative but to submit or to refuse everything. Moreover, he induced nineteen Bishops, assembled at the house of Cardinal Fesch, to sign a distinct summons, which appeared to express the opinion of the whole French clergy, and in which the Sovereign Pontiff was implored 'not to reduce the Church of France to the distressing necessity of providing for her own preservation.'[2] The threat was most direct, however well disguised under the form of a prayer.

bishop of Tours. This collection reflects the views of the Committee, and reproduces the principal documents drawn up by its leaders.

[1] D'Haussonville.

[2] De Barral, *Fragments sur l'histoire ecclesiastique.*

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The three Bishops chosen to proceed to the Holy Father, were better known for ability and eminence in theology than for independence of character. They were de Barral, Archbishop of Tours; Duvoisin, Bishop of Nantes; and Mannay, Bishop of Trèves. They were instructed to propose the restoration of the Concordat, on the twofold condition that the Pope should consent to institute the Bishops already nominated, and should exercise in future his right of institution within the three months following the nomination made by the Emperor, in default of which the institution should be made by the Metropolitan. If the Pope evinced conciliatory dispositions, they might propose a more extended treaty to him, grounded upon the basis of his return to Rome, on condition of his taking the oath to the Emperor. Should he object to the oath, then they might be satisfied with a simple promise to do nothing against the Gallican liberties, but in such case the Pope's residence would be fixed at Avignon. He should receive a salary of two millions, have the *chargés d'affaires* of Christendom around him, and the enjoyment of his spiritual administration; but in any case the restoration of the temporal power of the Popes would be out of the question.[1] The deputies were not to make their powers known, unless they found the Pope in 'a reasonable frame of mind.'

On arriving at Savona early in the month of May, 1811, the three Bishops found Pius VII subjected to the description of cellular system which Napoleon had inflicted on him for nearly five months past, under the supreme *surveillance* of the Prefect of Montenotte, M. de Chabrol. Everything had been so well contrived to intimidate him, that, for the moment, he thought that the three prelates had come to commence his trial before the Council. They have themselves described how they had to tranquilise him on this point.[2] After having calmed his fears by the most earnest demonstrations of respect and attachment, they represented to him—speaking as if in the name of

[1] Instructions for the three Bishops, April 26, 1811.
[2] First letter of the Bishops, May 10, 1811.

the clergy—the necessity for putting an end to the distressing situation of the Church of France, and then explained in general terms the conditions of settlement, without however immediately informing him of the promise which the Emperor required relative to the Gallican liberties.

The Pope, agreeably undeceived as to the fresh severities he had been dreading, showed a somewhat conciliatory disposition, alluded with touching goodness to his old friendship for Napoleon, and spoke without acrimony of the harsh captivity to which he was condemned. But he insisted, not unreasonably, on the impossibility of his coming to any decision, so long as he was not free and surrounded by his habitual advisers. On this point he was invincible, for, every impartial mind must have considered it as a shocking abuse of power to force a prisoner to sign a treaty which was destined so profoundly to modify the constitution of the Church, while he was separated from his councillors, and subjected to treatment calculated to deprive him not only of all mental freedom, but also of every means of study and careful appreciation of the subject.

In the subsequent interviews, the Pope discussed the terms of the proposed compromise. He argued with much reason that the transfer of the right of institution to the Metropolitan, after a certain delay, was equivalent to the suppression of the Pontifical institution, and left nothing standing but the Emperor's right. He further observed that, though personally disposed never to dispute the Gallican liberties, he could not recognise them, since they had been condemned by one of his predecessors; but he returned to the necessity of his consulting the Doctors of the Church before coming to any decision.

The deputies, however, began to perceive that the old man's resistance was becoming less energetic. Above all, he was greatly disturbed by the idea that his refusals might cause a schism. His uneasiness brought on loss of sleep, and his health, always feeble, suffered from his scruples of conscience. From the moment that his resolution began to falter, the entreaties of the prelates became stronger. The only intimate

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confidant whom the Pope then boasted was his doctor, who had been bribed by M. de Chabrol, and did all in his power to support the petitions of the Bishops, as well as the alternately obsequious and menacing language of the Prefect of Montenotte. Exposed to these incessant entreaties, and his mind a prey to the sense of a responsibility, the weight of which he had no strength to bear, Pope Pius VII grew weak, as he did in every critical circumstance of his life.[1] He consented, not to sign, but to accept a note, by which he bound himself, first, to institute the Bishops already nominated by the Emperor; secondly, to leave their institution to the Metropolitan in case the Pope should not have exercised his right within the space of six months; and, thirdly, to examine the proposals of settlement having for their object the restoration of the peace of the Church.

The prelates had no sooner quitted Savona than his lively imagination represented to him, with extraordinary force, all the consequences of this act of weakness. He reproached himself for it, as if he had been guilty of a kind of simony, a disgrace, or a crime. He desired to retract it at once, and had no rest until he sent messengers in haste after the Bishops, to tell them that the note was only a draft, with no definite official character. Such inner struggles and scruples of conscience, the sincerity of which cannot be disputed, sufficiently show how difficult of solution was this question of the institution of the Bishops, especially in the terms in which Napoleon persisted in placing it; in other words, by annulling the spiritual power in favour of the civil authority. But the Emperor understood these difficulties so little, or at least took so little heed of them, that far from seeming satisfied with the extraordinary and unhoped-for concessions, which his artifices had wrested from the weakness of the Holy Father, he hoped to obtain far better ones from the docility of the Members of the

[1] The report of the Prefect Chabrol, published for the first time by M. d'Haussonville in his remarkable *Histoire de l'Église Romaine sous le premier Empire*, throws completely new light on the means employed by Napoleon to overcome the resistance of Pius VII.

Council. Hence arose the profound silence which he at first imposed upon the three Bishops relative to the result of their negotiation with the Pope. It would be quite time enough, he thought, to fall back upon that negotiation as a last resource, should the assembly not answer his expectations in its readiness to please him.

The Council of 1811 was, strictly speaking, not a national one in the ordinary sense of the word, since it included the Bishops of Italy besides those of France; nor œcumenical, which Napoleon would have preferred, since it had been found necessary to admit the impossibility of convoking the Bishops of Spain and of some other Catholic countries. However, it was an imposing ecclesiastical meeting, which at the same time offered the Emperor, in its component parts, every guarantee of submission that he could desire. He was personally acquainted with the majority of the prelates, and had put their accommodating dispositions to the proof often enough to know that he might count upon them. But his strictly mathematical genius committed a serious mistake in supposing that a correct estimate of the spirit of an assembly can be made from the sum of the individual characters which contribute to form it, and that a Council composed of devoted Bishops cannot fail to be servile.

Men united in one body have, in fact, scruples and susceptibilities to which as individuals they are quite insensible. This it is which makes assemblies so often disappoint the expectations of those who think they understand them best. The first sitting of the Council, opened in the name of the Emperor on the 17th of June, 1811, ended by a solemn oath of obedience to the Pope. This oath was in itself almost a commonplace formality, but, when addressed to a State prisoner in presence of his persecutor, and resounding amidst the silence of bondage, it gave a completely new sense to the perilous circumstances in which the Catholic Church then stood. It powerfully impressed the imaginations of all present, and suddenly acquired the character and the accent of a kind of *Oath of a sacerdotal Jeu de Paume*. And who was the mover—involuntary

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most certainly — of this well-nigh hostile display? Cardinal Fesch, President of the Council, uncle to the Emperor, and the one most interested, both by position and natural inclination, in calming the public mind and avoiding every dangerous incident.

The oath, the exclamation which accompanied it and resembled an explosion of minds long repressed, the passionate impulse with which it was taken, and the unforeseen significance given to it, annoyed Napoleon in the highest degree. On the representation of his Councillors he consented to regard the display as a mere traditional ceremony; but on the very next day he added to the Council two superintendents (*surveillants*) in the persons of Bigot de Préameneu and Marescalchi, Ministers of Public Worship in France and Italy. An Imperial message, full of offensive allusions to Pius VII, subsequently apprised the members of the Council of what was expected from their good-will. Having denounced the *sinister projects of the Pope*, and the fatal effects of his Bulls, 'which had excited general indignation,' Napoleon proceeded to trace the history of his disputes with the Holy See, carefully abstaining, however, from making the faintest allusion to his own violence towards the person of the Holy Father. He recalled the benefits he had showered upon the Church, announced his intention of 'providing for the transmission of the Episcopate in the manner that should be pointed out by the Council,' and of no longer tolerating 'that a single person should pretend to substitute his authority for that of all.'[1] No one dreamt, either of noticing how strange this republican maxim sounded in the mouth of the author of the 18th Brumaire, or of condemning the insults which the all-powerful Emperor addressed to his victim.

But although under the influence of terror, the assembly did not conceal its sentiments in the sitting in which the address in answer to the message was discussed: 'What!' exclaimed Dessoll, Bishop of Chambéry, 'we are discussing an address,

[1] *Discours d'ouverture*, given by the Emperor to the Minister of Public Worship, June 18, 1811.

and there is no question in it about the liberty of the Pope! Let us all go, if necessary, and throw ourselves at the Emperor's feet to ask it of him!'[1] This oratorical outburst produced an indescribable effect upon the assembly. Rising at once, amid loud applause, they proposed to go at once to St. Cloud, there to petition the Emperor; nor was it without great difficulty that Cardinal Fesch, seconded by some obsequious and cautious prelates, at last succeeded in postponing the proceeding.

Napoleon, more and more disappointed and irritated by the utterly unexpected though timid independence which he encountered amongst the members of the Council, testified his displeasure by refusing to receive their address. He reminded them, harshly, that he expected the settlement of the canonical institution and nothing else; giving them *eight days* in which to decide the question. It was necessary, therefore, to set about the examination of this most delicate difficulty as quickly as possible. At the first sitting of the committee chosen to consider the question, a capital objection presented itself, to which very little attention had been hitherto paid. In the matter of the Institution two rights existed, that of the Emperor and that of the Pope. Now a national Council, no matter what its authority, is restricted by its nature; is it then competent to decide upon a right which belongs to the Holy See? It is clearly evident, even from the Gallican point of view, that such a power ought only to appertain to the Church itself; or, in other words, to an œcumenical Council. Divided between a sense of duty and a fear of exasperating the Emperor, the Committee spent several days in seeking for some means of conciliating the contradictory opinions, or rather the very opposite interests, at play in this debate. But after long vacillation the partisans of the Council's incompetency, namely, the Bishops of Tournay, Bourdeaux, and Ghent, prevailed over the champions of Imperial omnipotence, Fesch, Duvoisin, and Barral.

[1] Journal of the Bishop of Ghent, Monsgr. de Broglie, published by M. de Haussonville.

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Seeing therefore the impossibility of attaining any result, and the little effect produced by his sneers against those whom he called 'the beadles of the Church,'[1] Napoleon at length decided on making known to the Committee the concessions which the three Bishops, sent as deputies to Savona, had obtained from the Pope. The transaction being thus proposed with the consent of the Holy See, it seemed as though every obstacle were removed. But the tardy communication was not as successful as was hoped, either because the very delay roused suspicion, or because something had transpired as to the change which had taken place in the mind of Pius VII. The Committee, at first converted to the Emperor's ideas, almost immediately after reverted to its original feeling as to the incompetency of the Council. It consented, however, to accept the decree proposed in the name of the Emperor, but expressly stipulated that it should be submitted to the Pope for his approbation. On the 10th of July, 1811, the Council met again to listen to the reading of the report by the Bishop of Tournay, who constituted himself the interpreter of the opinions of the Committee. His conclusions spread trouble and agitation in the heart of the Assembly. The partisans of the Pope and of the Emperor began a series of mutual recriminations, alternately reproaching each other with usurping either the rights of the Church, or, on the other hand, the Bull of excommunication; until finally, the Archbishop of Bourdeaux exclaimed, 'If a Pope cannot excommunicate, then blame the Church which has so established it!'

This was far more than the partisan of the *power of all* as against the power of one alone could tolerate; and these words were the death-warrant of the national Council. On the morrow an Imperial decree appeared announcing its dissolution. Napoleon had, it is true, wished for a Council, but on condition of its always being of his opinion; the prelates, however, had strangely forgotten this essential point of the part they had been called together to perform. The three principal leaders of the opposition, the Bishops of Tournay,

[1] Life of Cardinal Fesch by the Abbe Lyonnet, vol. ii.

Ghent, and Troyes were arrested and thrown into the dungeons of Vincennes, without its being possible to accuse them of any crime but that of having expressed and maintained an opinion which they had been asked to give. But this conclusion, after all, was the logical consequence of a system totally incompatible with the existence of any free assembly. It was, in fact, an 18th Brumaire against the representatives of the Church, and a sequel to the 18th Brumaire against the representatives of the Nation. And Napoleon, who had tried to what extent fear would operate as a parliamentary influence, was preparing to extract the same advantages from the trembling remnants of the purified Council, which he had derived from the dispersed members of the *Conseils*, after his *Coup d'Etat*.

Far from considering what had passed as a defeat, he looked upon himself as definite master of the position, for he no longer had to deal with convictions, but with despondency. He resolved to act, not upon an assembly—which even when most amenable is always restless—but upon each Bishop separately; persuaded, from his knowledge of their timid natures, that he would be able to make them, as individuals, say the very opposite of what they had affirmed in combination. The method by which this lamentable conversion was effected may easily be guessed when it is known that he employed the combined action of his Minister of Public Worship and his Minister of Police. 'It was then,' writes Savary, with an ingenious euphemism, 'that the Emperor ordered me to turn *the attention of my administration* towards the Council, which he had hitherto expressly desired me to leave to himself.'[1] Under such inspiration—certainly not that of the Holy Spirit—the members of the Council one after the other, to the number of eighty-five, signed a decree giving the power of canonical Institution to the Metropolitan, if within the space of six months the Pope had not made use of his right. This decree was to be submitted to the Pope for his sanction; but in case he should refuse it, the Council was to go on. Honourable conduct was

[1] Memoirs of the Duc de Broglie.

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never disavowed by a more disgraceful retractation. When this was accomplished, the unfortunate prelates, humbled and ashamed of their own weakness, were again convoked in Council on the 5th of August, 1811. Victors and vanquished again met face to face, both having equal cause to blush, the one side for its victory, the other for its defeat. They then voted the decree with downcast looks and in silence, as though overpowered by the weight of such a public retractation.

Early in September, a new deputation, composed of Cardinals and Bishops, went to Savona to submit the decree of the Council to Pius VII. When presenting him the summary of the deliberations of the venerable assembly, the prelates carefully avoided informing him of the persuasive means which had been employed to convince them. Beneath the influence of these chosen counsellors, who were unanimous in recommending him to be prudent, and urging the necessity of making concessions, the Holy Father, whose first impulse had been to return to and maintain his old theme, 'that he could decide on nothing so long as he was not free,'—again abandoned that ground upon which he was so strong, and followed the suggestion of the Council with resignation, and with a more tranquil conscience, since, as a pretext or excuse for his own weakness, he could now point to the example of so large a number of the Princes of the Church. He gave his approbation to the decrees of the Council in the form of a Brief addressed to the Bishops, with the addition of certain reservations on the subject of the Gallican doctrines.

Such concessions on the part of the Pope were an unhoped-for triumph for Napoleon. He had gained his cause most thoroughly, and it now depended on himself to turn his success to account by putting an end to so dangerous a quarrel. But these advantages were of trifling moment compared to those which he hoped to obtain later. He certainly hastened to profit by his victory, by causing the decree of the Council to be registered as a Law of the State, and having the nominated Bishops instituted. But he reserved to himself the right of referring the pontifical Brief to the Council of State, as

containing restrictions contrary to the principles of the Gallican Church.

Napoleon—more deeply absorbed from day to day in his preparations for war against Russia, and convinced that such a war was about to bring him an increase of *prestige*, greatness, and strength, unprecedented in the history of the world—abstained from answering the affectionate letter in which Pius VII announced his decision. He left the affairs of the Church in abeyance until the time when, to use his own expression, the Empire of the West being restored, the Popes would resume the modest position they had occupied under the Emperors of the West. 'Empire of the West' and 'Emperor of the Continent' were expressions incessantly on his lips, and betraying the fixed ideas that possessed his mind. Our diplomatic relations with Russia had entered upon a new phase—one which, in Napoleon's reign, was the invariable forerunner of approaching hostilities. From the period of secret armaments, concealed beneath protestations of affection, he had abruptly passed to the ostentatious display of his forces accompanied by open menace. The calm, steady moderation of Alexander had always made him believe that in the end he should succeed in intimidating him. Moreover, Napoleon could no longer avoid seeing the uselessness of all efforts to throw him on the wrong scent as to facts that were patent to the whole of Europe.

He consequently changed his tactics, and owned to Kourakine that his preparations were intended against Russia; adding, that when he had alleged his fear of an English expedition to the Baltic, he had used it only as a *pretext*;[1] an admission little calculated to inspire confidence in the future. At the same time he instructed Lauriston to declare to the Emperor of Russia, 'that Napoleon had armed, that he would go on arming still, that he had spent one hundred millions extra, that he could spend one hundred more without touching his reserves,

[1] Despatches from Prince Kourakine, dated May 7, 1811. *Archives Russes.*

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that he would soon add to the conscription of 1811 that of 1812, that he had raised thirty thousand horse, that all his allies were imitating his example—but that he was still always ready to listen to every proposal which might not be incompatible with his honour.'[1]

Unfortunately, what he declared incompatible with his honour was precisely that which alone could satisfy Russia; namely, either the simple restitution of the States he had seized to the detriment of the Duke of Oldenburg; or compensation therefor, consisting of that portion of Poland which he had given to Saxony. As these preliminary demonstrations seemed to produce little impression on the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, which appeared to be quietly entrenching itself within its defensive system, Napoleon determined to follow them up by some public act, as though a scandal of that kind would give more solemnity to the warning. In the grand reception, therefore, of the 15th of August, 1811, after the fireworks were over, the Emperor, according to his custom, was making the round of the *salons* in the Palace of the Tuileries, filled that night to overflowing with a brilliant throng, when, on reaching the throne-room, he went straight up to Kourakine. Then, taking him aside, in presence of all the foreign ambassadors, he rapidly addressed to him one of those famous challenges which periodically announced to Europe that a new war had been resolved upon. It was exactly three years, to a day, since Metternich had undergone similar treatment, and no one had forgotten the consequences. His attack, the violent portion of which had been studied beforehand and which lasted upwards of two hours,[2] naturally consisted of one long accusation admitting of no answer, a fact in itself sufficient evidence of its impropriety and bad taste. For an ambassador, who was required to weigh every word and to be careful above all not to commit his Government, it was impossible to accept a diplomatic discussion on such a spot, before such an audience,

[1] Napoleon to Maret, June 21, 1811.

[2] *Archives Russes*: Despatch of Prince Kourakine, dated August 15, 1811.

and opposed to such an adversary. He was condemned to receive every blow, without being able to return a single one; and Napoleon, abusing the privilege of his own position, enjoyed the embarrassment of his adversary, as though it were a first victory obtained over the power which had incurred his anger.

In this long attack on Russia, Napoleon recapitulated all his grievances, true and false. He complained that preparations for war had been the only answer to the advances he had made during the last six months, and to his offers of indemnity to the Duke of Oldenburg, who, after all, if not his subject was at least his vassal, belonging much more to France than to Russia, as he was a member of the Confederation of the Rhine. Such an indemnity they no doubt wished to get in Poland, but he never would give up one inch of that territory; and their not accepting a portion of Germany meant that they wished for war. Hence the precipitate armaments of Russia, the recall of troops from the Danube at the time they were required there more than ever against the Turks, and at the risk of being defeated by the latter, as they had been in fact before Rustschuk. Such being the case, how could they hope to make him believe they did not wish for war? *As for him, he was a man of that nature, that, when he did not understand, he mistrusted!* Therefore, he had armed in his turn, armed for his defence. But, *although he had more money and more resources than Russia*, he could not continue to make such sacrifices for ever. A time would come when the measure would be full, and when he would be forced against his will to draw the sword. . . . However, he persisted in not desiring war, although he could soon place 600,000 men in line against Russia, while at the same time continuing to send 25,000 annually to Spain. If they reached this point, if this fatal war were to take place, Alexander and Romanzoff would alone be responsible for the evils it would cause, for they might know well enough when it began, but no one could tell when or how it would end. On that point they seemed to labour under inconceivable blindness. They had the *vertigo* at St. Petersburg; *they were like a hare who has*

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been shot in the head, and turns round without knowing where he is going to. But, they ought to remember that he was not accustomed to be defeated; they ought to recollect the fate of Prussia, who had also once wished to rush on her ruin![1]

Before the Emperor had finished his long scolding harangue, the *salons* of the Palace had grown empty, and all the witnesses of this painful scene had glided away one by one, with the exception of the Ambassadors of Austria and of Spain,—a mute but significant protest, so well described in Talleyrand's charming witticism, 'What a pity that a great man should be so ill-bred!' Poor Kourakine, still ill from the effects of the burns he had received in the fire at Prince Schwarzenberg's Palace, and suffering great pain, remained standing during this volley, 'without,' as he himself wrote, 'appearing for one moment either downcast, uneasy, or impatient, but motionless, with the calmest aspect, and a smile always playing on his mouth.'[2]

Next day the whole world knew that a rupture with Russia had become imminent. Matters had now reached a point at which hostilities would at once have commenced had the season been less advanced. The threats which Napoleon had thus publicly levelled at Russia in no degree modified the attitude of that power. They had no other result than to induce Alexander immediately to declare to Lauriston, 'that he would refuse all indemnity in Poland, and that he held strictly to the restitution of Oldenburg.'

Peace, however, continued to be spoken of, and those pretended negotiations were kept up, in which each side only tries to place his adversary in the wrong, resembling the first essays in fencing, where two combatants cross their sword. They even went so far as to propose disarmament;[3] the two Emperors mutually saying they were ready to consent to it, while both redoubled their activity in pressing forward their

[1] *Archives Russes*, Despatch of Prince Kourakine, dated August 15, 1811.
[2] *Archives Russes.* Ibid.
[3] Napoleon to Marot, Nov. 6, 1811.

preparations. Alexander's disarmament consisted in ordering a levy of a 100,000 men; and Napoleon's, in calling out the conscription of 1812. They persisted likewise in swearing in the strongest manner that neither would be the first to draw the sword, while Alexander announced the departure of a new negotiator commissioned to settle everything, and Napoleon pretended to attach the utmost importance to the arrival of that same diplomatist, who, however, never came. All this was only so much pretence. In reality, neither the one nor the other wished to draw back; but each felt the enormity of such a war, and its inevitable and incalculable results, and each endeavoured to avoid at least the immediate responsibility of it. On this ground Napoleon did not maintain his advantage any better than on that of strict right; for if Alexander still said, as he continued to say to the very last, 'I will not attack, I shall defend myself'; Napoleon was beginning to say, 'They will force me to attack in order to defend myself.'

Henceforward, secure of having the whole of Europe with him, even the governments of Prussia and Austria which he had treated with such merciless rigour, he became more confirmed in his designs from the certainty of having collected every chance of success on his side. He even began to calculate the resources which the war would place in his hand. Not only ought it to give him the dominion of the world, but likewise a means of restoring his finances: 'I shall make this war for a political object, but also for the sake of my finances. Have I not always re-established them by war?' he wrote, in answer to the representations of his Ministers, Gaudin and Mollien.[1] It is allowable to suppose, from some remarks which occasionally escaped him, and from his unwonted delay in coming to a final decision, that some apprehension as to the ultimate issue of the enterprise occasionally flitted across his mind. The immense extent of his preparations, however, and the extreme precision of his calculations, which included and foresaw everything, only served the more effectually to hide from him the

[1] *Mémoirs de Mollien.*

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snare into which he was about to fall. According to all the positive data of the formidable problem, was he not certain to solve it to his advantage? For had he not superiority in numbers, in resources, in troops and in generalship?

From this point of view, the only decisive one in his opinion, his victory might in some sort be proved scientifically. But were there no other elements to take into account, equally real though less known? Alongside that official Europe which prostrated itself so low at his feet, was there not another Europe, the people themselves, menacing, irritated, impatient to rise against him? Alongside the force of armaments, was there not the force of patriotism, love of liberty, hatred, national vengeance? In fine, were there not, above the resources of regular tactics, the surprises, terrible as they were unforeseen, of those tactics of despair which the Spaniards had already proved to be so efficacious.

All this latent energy—which was nothing else than the tardy reawakening of the moral forces of European society—counted for nothing in Napoleon's eyes. Had it not been by denying their existence or by trampling them under foot that he had built up his fortune to such a height? How then could he attribute a power to them at that date, which he had invariably refused to them heretofore? Warnings and cautions were not, however, wanting to him. He had been at several different times informed of the desperate plans of Russia and her savage resolve to destroy all around him, provided he could be involved in the destruction of the Empire. He was cautioned, with even more earnestness, of the German conspiracies. Alquier transmitted to him from Stockholm a significant remark of Alexander's: 'If the Emperor Napoleon should experience a reverse, the whole of Germany will rise to oppose his retreat, or to prevent the arrival of his re-inforcements.' His brother Jerome, who was still better situated for knowing what was going on in Germany, informed him, in the month of January, 1811, of the proposal that had been made to him to enter into a secret league against France, but the only thanks he received from Napoleon was reproach for having encouraged such overtures

by his equivocal conduct.[1] Jerome however returned to the subject in July, and again in December, 1811:—

'If any persons speak to your Majesty of tranquillity and submission, they deceive you. Excitement exists in the highest degree, the wildest hopes are fostered and nursed with enthusiasm; the example of Spain is everywhere welcomed, and should war break out, every country situated between the Rhine and the Oder will be the focus of a vast and energetic insurrection.'[2] Marshal Davout and General Rapp transmitted him identically the same information from Hamburg and Dantzig. But far from encouraging such confidential communications, Napoleon was irritated by them, either because he declined to question the possibility of success, or that they seemed a kind of slur cast on the infallibility of his genius.

'There is nothing in common between Spain and Germany,' he wrote to Davout, . . . 'There is no cause for fear, even were Germany as large, as slothful, as much addicted to assassination, or given over to the monks, as the people of Spain, where there are 300,000 monks. Consider, therefore, what have we to dread from a people who are so prudent, so reasonable, so cold, so tolerant, so little inclined to excess of any kind, that there is no instance of a man having been assassinated in Germany during the war. If there were any stir in Germany it would be *in our favour* and against the petty princes!' Rapp's information met with even a worse reception: 'I do not know why Rapp meddles in *what does not concern him*. . . . What makes him talk of what passes in Hungary and of the spirit which animates the Confederation and those countries, he who is far away from them? *I beg you will not place such rhapsodies under my eyes.* My time is too precious to waste on such twaddle. . . . It only serves to make me lose my time and to *soil my mind* by absurd pictures or suppositions.'[3]

In presence of such hallucination, caused by pride and infatuation, we seem to hear Macbeth in his delirium insulting the

[1] Correspondence of King Jerome, vol. v, January 16 and 21, 1811.
[2] Jerome to Napoleon, December 5, 1811.
[3] Napoleon to Davout, December 2, 1810.

messengers who announce to him the approach of the enemy's armies:—

'Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:
The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
Shall never sway with doubt, or shake with fear.'

In the same way had this upstart, this great calculator, this observer, once so full of penetration and so prompt to seize every circumstance which could serve him, now ended by falling into a passion, like a child, against the tranquil and sovereign power of facts. Facts which had the misfortune to displease him he viewed as non-existing; or rather he treated them as rebellious courtiers, whom a great king suppresses and dismisses by driving them from his presence. He no longer deigned to enter into any discusssion with the force of things. An obstacle ceased to exist from the moment that he had refused to see it. And this was the result of ten years of absolute power! One day, however, at the close of this very year, 1811, which ended under such sad auspices, a ray of wisdom and reason flashed across the mind which was already tottering, and Napoleon wrote to his librarian to ask him 'for the most detailed information obtainable upon *the Campaign of Charles XII in Poland and Russia*.'[1] What lessons in the name of Charles XII and the disastrous recollections of Pultowa! It was no chance which brought that prophetic name beneath his pen. What ought he to have seen in it? A presentiment? a last warning given him by fate? He probably rather found in it an opportunity for applauding and exalting himself at the expense of the Swedish adventurer! The impressions to which the perusal gave rise in his mind have remained unknown, but his acts sufficiently prove that the lesson was lost. To him who is determined to perish, everything—even an instrument of salvation—becomes a snare and a danger.

[1] Napoleon to M. Barbier, December 19, 1811.

M. LANFREY *died Nov.* 16, 1877, *aged forty-nine, leaving his* HISTORY OF NAPOLEON *unfinished.*

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